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**AUGUSTUS SAINT-GAUDENS, HIS CRITICS, AND THE NEW SCHOOL
OF AMERICAN SCULPTURE, 1875-1893**

by

THAYER TOLLES

**A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty in Art History in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, The City University of New
York**

2003

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Abstract

Augustus Saint-Gaudens, His Critics, and the New School of American Sculpture.

1875-1893

by

Thayer Tolles

Advisor: Professor Sally Webster

This dissertation explores the development of Augustus Saint-Gaudens's critical reputation through the lens of his participation in American art venues and the published reception to his sculptures. During the first half of his career, through the late 1870s and 1880s, Saint-Gaudens consistently exhibited his portrait busts and bas-reliefs, most notably at the Society of American Artists in New York. Since then, these works have been eclipsed in scholarly and critical attention by his successful public monuments in New York, Chicago, and Boston, and have sustained his rank as an American master sculptor. Yet along with these great monuments, Saint-Gaudens's small sculptures must be viewed as integral to the construction of his artistic persona and status. From his return to New York from Europe in 1875, he purposefully marketed his public image with the twin goals of attracting lucrative monumental commissions and promoting the legitimacy of American sculpture on American shores. His participation in exhibition venues, role in the management of the overseeing organizations, and affiliation with well-placed critics, artists, and patrons were seminal to his professional and social advancement.

A genteel circle of critics, including Richard Watson Gilder, Charles de Kay, and Mariana Van Rensselaer, trumpeted Saint-Gaudens as the harbinger of a new school of

American sculpture. The published reaction to Saint-Gaudens's small work in New York newspapers and art journals between 1875 and 1893 put him in context with his fellow sculptors and contemporary aesthetic debates. The art writings also assert Saint-Gaudens's genius, often in propagandistic terms. His sculptures—large and small, public and private—were at once evidence of sophisticated foreign-trained talent working in an original idiom as well as a refutation of American artistic provincialism. Saint-Gaudens was central to the new movement of young cosmopolitan painters and sculptors who emphasized subjective aesthetics over transcriptional subjects. By the early 1890s, as a well-established and overcommitted artist, Saint-Gaudens's involvement in art venues diminished. His unique artistic talent and the unwavering backing of certain loyal critics propelled him to the position of role model and tastemaker by 1893.

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Introduction

After Augustus Saint-Gaudens's death in August 1907, his contribution to American art and culture was universally saluted in newspapers and journals across the country. Five months later, in January 1908, the Boston art critic and painter Philip L. Hale asked which American sculptor was Saint-Gaudens's logical successor. Hale concluded: "the fact is, there's no such thing as the successor to a man of great talent," yet he named a handful of possibilities and observed that "there are, of course, lots and lots of other sculptors of very considerable ability."¹

The legitimacy of Hale's statement is credit alone to Saint-Gaudens's great accomplishments, which by example encouraged so many professional sculptors to work on American shores in a distinctly national idiom and to display their work in prestigious national exhibition venues. During the three decades of Saint-Gaudens's remarkable career, the concept of a professionalized American school of sculpture took hold, was strenuously promoted, and flourished. This nationalistic ideal, eagerly promoted by the art press and by Saint-Gaudens himself, was due in no small part to his unique contribution as a sculptor, teacher, arbiter of taste, and professional role model during the American Renaissance. Indeed, the respected Chicago sculptor Lorado Taft had in 1896 conferred upon Saint-Gaudens "leadership in the 'new movement' in American sculpture. So great is his prestige to-day that he might almost be entitled its dictator."²

Throughout his career the sculptor constructed and maintained three interrelated networks of professional backing—artists, patrons, and significantly, critics. The high quality and new aesthetic direction of Saint-Gaudens's public and private sculptures, his

charismatic personality, and his “genius for friendship,”³ as Kenyon Cox put it, would have alone guaranteed the sculptor professional status. However, his unchallenged rank at the head of an American school of sculpture was established and further nurtured through his devoted group of critics, a loyal coterie of supporters who advocated on his behalf and held similar ambitions for the progress of American art. This New York-based circle of professional writers—notably Richard Watson Gilder, Charles de Kay, and Mariana Griswold Van Rensselaer—steadfastly promoted him from an unknown artist in the mid-1870s to his death as an international figure in 1907. The deliberate construction of an individual reputation and a professional discipline was crafted hand-in-hand by Saint-Gaudens and these self-appointed custodians of culture through friendship and a shared conviction in the viability of American art. Among the most powerful avenues for communicating their aesthetic standards were the published newspaper and journal reviews accompanying the annual exhibitions in which Saint-Gaudens and other new movement artists participated in the 1870s and 1880s.

This dissertation will examine Saint-Gaudens’s remarkable career in the United States through the lens of his personal and professional relationships with critics and their response to his public monuments and the smaller sculptures that he submitted to American art exhibitions. What will become evident is mutual ambition and interdependence: the writers needed Saint-Gaudens as much as he needed them, as they strove together to define and establish the criteria for a national school of sculpture. For the sculptor, concerned both with self-promotion and this larger ambitious cultural agenda, the press served to publicly advance his reputation and his technically exquisite work in daily newspapers as well as in art and general-interest journals, most strenuously

in the 1870s and 1880s. For the critics, the sculptor was an exceptionally talented homegrown and home-based figure who perfectly suited their definition of and aspirations for a national school of artists, a school that was at once responsive to European artistic trends but also reflected American subjects and values.

Through the example of Saint-Gaudens and other cosmopolitan artists and architects whom the writers proudly counted as friends, they aggressively promoted American aesthetic progress and prowess in an international context, refuting charges of provincialism. In a larger respect, these critics—who fashioned themselves as professional tastemakers—strove to reinforce national cultural, political, and economic agendas in a global realm. At the same time, Saint-Gaudens's most dedicated critical advocates were among a patrician cultural elite that believed that instructing and guiding the public in matters of aesthetic taste would serve as a last line of defense against encroaching immigration, industrialization, and commercialization. Public memorials such as the *Admiral David Glasgow Farragut Monument* of 1881 and *Abraham Lincoln: The Man (Standing Lincoln)* of 1887 served as pedagogical exemplars to explicate the tenets of national sculpture. In that sense, the critics articulated—in their own opinionated terms—the collective ambitions of themselves and the sculptor.

Younger, more cosmopolitan members of the press gravitated to Saint-Gaudens early in his career, soon upon his return from Rome in March 1875. Their eagerness to embrace new sculptural talent suggests its relative dearth in this country, with the major exceptions of Henry Kirke Brown, Erastus Dow Palmer, and John Quincy Adams Ward. For instance, ten years earlier, in reviewing the 1865 annual exhibition of the National Academy of Design, Clarence Cook, one of Saint-Gaudens's early and more fickle

supporters, wrote disparagingly of “a good modern statue being . . . your veritable black swan.”⁴ Pro-nationalist writers such as Cook were on the lookout for such “modern” talent whose sculpture would challenge and instruct, both aesthetically and thematically. They responded equivocally to the success of American sculptors working in Florence and Rome rather than in the United States, in a lingering neoclassical aesthetic that prized idealization of form and detail of finish, and that in subject offered little or no tangible expression of contemporary American life.

A new brand of modern cosmopolitanism, spawned by sculptors at the leading edge of aesthetic taste, particularly appealed to these writers who saw it as their mission to elevate the status of American sculpture as a discipline and American sculptors as organized professionals. It also provoked an internal tension for the critics, at once eager to view American sculpture within an international aesthetic context and to classify its distinctly national characteristics. Often they arrived at resolution by proclaiming the creative originality of the artist—a natural genius at once rooted in innate American character, but also cultivated through association with European methods and models. This model corresponds with shifting definition of a school of art during this period away from artists with shared training or geography to a mutual “esprit de corps; each [artist] was encouraged to work toward a common goal in his own way.”⁵

Saint-Gaudens was in a sense in the right place at the right time—a sculptor whose career fortuitously paralleled the great Gilded Age of New York and who through his work and his actions embodied and articulated its cultural aspirations. In the late 1860s he trained in Paris, the new center of the art world, mastering a vital naturalistic Beaux-Arts aesthetic and gaining a sophisticated appreciation for an interdisciplinary

collaboration between painters, sculptors, architects, and designers. He became the sculptor of choice for these writers who espoused the cosmopolitanism of European training coupled with subject matter that suggested American identity. Saint-Gaudens himself advocated this solution for artists, writing in 1877: “I think that an artist who has had a good training need not be so much at sea in America as I imagined—naturally on condition that his education has been made abroad and that he can come abroad occasionally.”⁶

Saint-Gaudens’s appearance in the art writing of the time began tentatively with his participation in (and exclusion from) exhibitions in the mid- and late-1870s. It was amplified in his work for Saint Thomas Church with John La Farge in 1877 and through his participation in the Society of American Artists exhibition of 1880 with his commanding marble bust of Theodore Dwight Woolsey. It was codified and nationalized through the unveiling of the *Farragut Monument* in Madison Square Park in 1881. Saint-Gaudens’s leading presence in writings on sculpture continued during the 1880s with his ongoing involvement in exhibition venues and, most importantly, through the dedication of Chicago’s *Standing Lincoln* in 1887 and his ever-increasing status as professional role model. By 1893, the year of the Chicago World’s Columbian Exposition, his prominence as this country’s leading sculptor was broadly acknowledged, as both the artist and his writers had largely fulfilled their interdependent nationalistic agendas.

Historiography

American sculpture studies have historically lagged behind the rest of the art history field, perhaps one consequence of the lesser attention that nineteenth-century writers accorded the plastic arts. This dissertation is the first concentrated examination of ongoing critical response to the work of a nineteenth-century American sculptor. In recent years, scholars of American painting have undertaken similar investigations on such major artists as Thomas Eakins, Winslow Homer, Albert Pinkham Ryder, and John Singer Sargent.⁷ These studies were informative because of the chronological overlap, shared exhibition venues and critics, and corollary aesthetic themes that are applicable to Saint-Gaudens and other American sculptors of this period.

This project on Saint-Gaudens's critical reception during the first half of his career developed from my examination of late-nineteenth-century New York-based newspapers and journals, the most essential archival resource for this topic.⁸ I surveyed art-related notices and articles in order to formulate a clearer picture of Saint-Gaudens's rise and progress as well as critical opinions about his work from the standpoint of the contemporary art press. In addition, several of the critics closely associated with the sculptor and the promotion of his reputation have been the subjects of extended scholarly analysis.⁹ These writings have been useful in defining the nature of Saint-Gaudens's individual relationships with members of the press, especially those who favored him and propagandized on his behalf. Furthermore, two studies with institutional and critical foci are indispensable resources: David Dearing's exhibition catalogue *Rave Reviews: American Art and Its Critics, 1826-1925* on the National Academy of Design, the most complete investigation of nineteenth-century American art criticism to date, and Jennifer

A. Martin Bienenstock's dissertation on the early years of the Society of American Artists.¹⁰

The principal archival repository for Saint-Gaudens is the Dartmouth College Library in Hanover, New Hampshire. Despite disastrous fires at the artist's Cornish, New Hampshire, estate in 1904 and 1944 and the loss of business records and correspondence with treasured friends, the Dartmouth papers are the starting point for any examination of the artist, his work, and his remarkable body of correspondents. *The Reminiscences of Augustus Saint-Gaudens* (1913), edited by his son Homer Saint-Gaudens, interweaves transcriptions of letters to and from the sculptor, passages from the sculptor's unfinished biography, "Reminiscences of an Idiot," started in 1906, and Homer's own narrative.¹¹ The *Reminiscences*, although unique and valuable, were sanitized by Homer, his mother Augusta, and other friends and family members. The two volumes are thus an incomplete introduction to the comprehensive Saint-Gaudens. Popular books on Saint-Gaudens by Louise Hall Tharp (1969) and Burke Wilkinson (1985) provide useful general biographical overviews,¹² but focus on the artist as a personality rather than examine or analyze his work critically or contextually. Margaret Bouton's dissertation (1946) on Saint-Gaudens's early work, which emphasizes stylistic issues, is insightful, but dated and often inaccurate.¹³

Monographic writings on Saint-Gaudens have emphasized "building block" issues of the artist's biography, oeuvre, and style. This literature universally acknowledges his stature as America's preeminent sculptor of the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries, but only superficially sets him into critical context, or indeed even into the context of other American sculptors working in this country. Certain critical highpoints,

such as the unveilings of the *Farragut* (1881) and *Colonel Robert Gould Shaw* (1897) monuments and his participation at the 1900 Paris Exposition Universelle, are repeatedly cited, but not assessed in relation to the construction of his larger reputation or his role in defining a national art. This dissertation will address this shortcoming by examining little-studied facets of the artist and his early sculptural output, and by bringing his career and his relationship with writers and other artists into sharper focus.

The last three decades have witnessed an effort on the part of art historians to address Saint-Gaudens the artist from multiple perspectives—contextual, formal, and thematic. In 1969 John Dryfhout and Beverly Cox published an exhibition catalogue of Saint-Gaudens's remarkable bas-relief portraits,¹⁴ a segment of his oeuvre that is my principal area of examination. Dryfhout's *The Work of Augustus Saint-Gaudens* (1982), the definitive resource on Saint-Gaudens, is a catalogue raisonné of more than 200 objects.¹⁵ Two exhibition catalogues, *Augustus Saint-Gaudens: Master Sculptor* (1985) and *Augustus Saint-Gaudens, 1848-1907: A Master of American Sculpture* (1999), have focused on the sculptor's career in an international context.¹⁶ Doctoral dissertations—by Lois Goldreich Marcus, Cynthia J. Mills, and Joyce Karen Schiller—examine Saint-Gaudens's output as a monumental sculptor.¹⁷ Collectively, these authors, by offering careful analyses of Saint-Gaudens's major monuments, provide a clear picture of the history and chronology of his public commissions. I build upon these studies by assessing and interconnecting the early monuments and the smaller exhibited works in order to contextualize broader issues relating to the development of Saint-Gaudens's reputation and his aspirations for a national school of artists.

Organization of the Dissertation

Within the discussion of Saint-Gaudens's critical reception, I have chosen to set several parameters, which focus but do not restrict the arguments I set forth. The first is chronological, encompassing the years from 1875 to 1893, or roughly from the Philadelphia Centennial International Exhibition of 1876 to the Chicago World's Columbian Exposition of 1893, the time frame during which new movement artists and critics most stridently articulated their ambitions for a national art through their art and writings. 1875 marks Saint-Gaudens's return from Rome to New York as a young professional sculptor. By 1893, Saint-Gaudens's reputation as a sculptor of monuments and small works was developed; his unique personal style was fully formed; his seniority in the American sculpture field was broadly acknowledged. This twenty-year period also witnessed in this country the transition from marble to bronze as the preferred medium, and from the waning of the neoclassical aesthetic to the full flowering of Beaux-Arts tenets, the basis of Saint-Gaudens's own personal style. These years also correspond to the period of the sculptor's most active participation in major American art venues where he exhibited his innovative portrait busts and bas-reliefs.

These exhibition venues, especially the National Academy of Design and the Society of American Artists, were the focus of the most intense and sustained art criticism during the nineteenth-century. My concentration on Saint-Gaudens's reputation through the lens of his smaller works, as well as the major monuments, is intended to broaden our understanding of the artist and a less-studied aspect of his oeuvre as well as to underscore his remarkable range. Instead of being viewed as ancillary to the

monuments that to date have attracted more scholarly emphasis, the portrait bas-reliefs and busts are central to an understanding of the artist's oeuvre during the 1870s and 1880s. As seen through late-nineteenth-century eyes, works such as *Jules Bastien-Lepage* or *The Children of Jacob H. Schiff* encapsulate some of the most engaging critical issues of the day. This approach will also add perspective to our knowledge of Saint-Gaudens's early monuments and the critical interdependency between these two aspects of his oeuvre, one public and the other essentially private. I give consideration to the reception of several major monuments at the beginnings of chapters 3, 4, and 5. I also emphasize criticism of smaller portraits shown at New York City venues and the ensuing responses by Saint-Gaudens's most ardent supporters and a wider circle of critics. In addition, examining the reception of these small sculptures allows Saint-Gaudens to be viewed in context with and against other American sculptors (and even painters) of the day, in a manner not possible in the more isolated instances of monument unveilings.

I center my discussion of art writers and critical response on New York, the core of the American artistic and literary world. Both larger critical patterns and those concerning Saint-Gaudens were established by the more sophisticated and knowledgeable New York press and echoed by writers in other urban centers.¹⁸ Furthermore, New York was also the city where Saint-Gaudens most frequently exhibited his sculptures and his home base between 1875 and 1877 and again from 1880 to 1897.

This dissertation is comprised of five chapters and a conclusion. Chapter 1 briefly addresses the state of American critical writing on sculpture and the agenda of the genteel circle of writers with whom Saint-Gaudens was most closely associated. This discussion is followed by an overview of Saint-Gaudens's rapport with critics and how they served

his objectives as an artist and a spokesperson for a national art. I then examine Saint-Gaudens's personal and professional relationships with a number of writers, notably Cook, Gilder, de Kay, Van Rensselaer, and Cox. Brief biographical details on other critics mentioned throughout the dissertation are provided in the text and endnotes, as is information about various publications as germane. Chapters 2 through 5 trace the development of Saint-Gaudens's career through the framework of discussions of major monument unveilings and the exhibition venues in which he participated. I focus on the annuals of the National Academy of Design and the Society of American Artists, New York's primary art venues during the time span of this dissertation. In examining Saint-Gaudens's contributions to the shows and the ensuing critical response in chronological sequence, larger thematic and stylistic issues emerge. The notion of a maturing school of American sculpture, in essence the professionalization of a discipline, is an underlying precept throughout, one that was promoted by artists and writers alike. So too is the identification of Saint-Gaudens and other like-minded artists, as inspired by the artistic ideals and examples of classical Greece and the Italian Renaissance, yet entirely original, even "modern" in their productions. The role that art venues played in the professionalism of sculpture and sculptors is also a recurrent theme, not only in how much and what type of sculpture was displayed, but also in the display conditions themselves. Other ongoing issues are the viability of the sketch as an exhibition-worthy object and the presence of Saint-Gaudens's innovative bas-relief portraits in the shows and their resulting impact on other sculptors.

Chapter 2 examines the period from 1875 to 1877, Saint-Gaudens's early years as an untested sculptor in New York after returning from several years of training and

working in Paris and Rome. It charts the sculptor's ambitions to establish a foothold in the New York art world and to construct his professional image through beneficial alliances with artists, patrons, and writers. During this period, Saint-Gaudens pursued collaborative work and systematically lobbied for New York's prize commission for a monument to Admiral Farragut. His sculpture was introduced to the American public for the first time, at the National Academy in New York in 1875 and at the Philadelphia Centennial Exposition in 1876, but did not attract critical attention. Instead, two events raised interest in Saint-Gaudens as a promising new school sculptor: the rejection of his plaster sketch from the National Academy of Design in spring 1877, an incident heavily publicized by Cook, and the sculptor's subsequent participation in the founding of the Society of American Artists with members of Gilder's inner circle.

Chapter 3 covers 1878 to 1880, the period during which Saint-Gaudens was in Paris working intensely on monumental commissions, especially the *Farragut*, as well as bas-relief portraits of friends. At the same time, select writer-advocates at home continued to fan the flames of his reputation, at first in response to his polychrome reredos completed for Saint Thomas Church in New York in 1877. The topics that engaged the critics in relation to Saint-Gaudens and his sculpture are established through his participation in early exhibitions of the Society of American Artists—notably the technical issue of finish versus polish, his incisive projection of character, the Americanness of his art in the context of his cosmopolitanism, and the uniqueness of his style against the backdrop of classical, early Italian Renaissance, and contemporary French models. In particular, the 1880 exhibition of the Society of American Artists led to a broadened base of support for Saint-Gaudens as the volume of perceptive writings on

sculpture increased markedly. In a larger sense, it represented a collective acknowledgment that American sculpture, now enlivened and redirected, was at a generational crossroads.

Chapter 4 examines the busy years of 1881 through 1886, when Saint-Gaudens returned to New York and became firmly established in the minds of the critics as *the* sculptor par excellence for the new movement as well as the undisputed leader of a new American school of French-trained sculptors. Acclaim for the *Farragut Monument*, unveiled in May 1881, signaled a new direction for American public sculpture and for Saint-Gaudens's expanding critical reputation. The monument offered the press assurance that his artistic talent was worthy of sustained promotion and garnered him widespread publicity that sowed the seeds for a national reputation. This period also encompassed Saint-Gaudens's most intense participation in art venues in New York—as well as other cities—in which his popular bas-reliefs, now embracing a more decorative pictorial aesthetic, were showcased. Critical response to innovative qualities of the sculptor's work focused on formal issues and reveals that he was largely immune from negative censure, so indispensable was his “genius” to critical champions of a new American art.

Chapter 5 assesses the years between 1887 and 1892, arguably a transitional period in Saint-Gaudens's career and in the American art world. In 1887 Saint-Gaudens witnessed the unveilings of the *Standing Lincoln* in Chicago and *The Puritan (Deacon Samuel Chapin)* in Springfield, Massachusetts, monuments that secured his national reputation and earned enthusiastic published endorsements from loyal advocates Cox and Van Rensselaer in Gilder's *Century Magazine*. Over the next few years he turned

away from smaller works to lucrative monumental commissions and exhibited at art venues only on a sporadic basis. Critics no longer identified Saint-Gaudens as a young talent, but as an elder statesman, a label affirmed by his elevation to National Academician and the dissolution of ideological boundaries between that institution and the Society of American Artists. By the late 1880s he exhibited his sculptures less for reputation-building purposes than for judicious image maintenance. Critical writing on American sculpture of these years—less spirited and incisive than a decade previous—continued to acknowledge Saint-Gaudens’s matchless talent and his contributions towards the professionalization of American sculpture and the development of a national school of artists. With Saint-Gaudens’s reputation as America’s leading sculptor secured, the writers also promoted a new generation of French-trained talent that had emerged in his wake.

As the centennial of Saint-Gaudens’s death approaches and the scholarly status of nineteenth-century American sculpture broadens and matures, the time is ripe to assess Saint-Gaudens’s remarkable career and his personal and professional relationships afresh. An abundance of archival material and primary sources, a well-documented oeuvre, and an accessible personality facilitate the task of inserting the sculptor in his rightful place among artists, critics, and other noteworthy figures. By examining the first half of the sculptor’s career from the standpoint of the contemporary art press, this dissertation reveals the considerable extent to which Saint-Gaudens was aided by those he described as “such bully friends who are such bully men.”¹⁹

Notes to the Introduction

¹ "Boston Critic on Successor to Saint Gaudens," *Monumental News* 20 (February 1908): 118-19.

² Lorado Taft, "American Sculpture and Sculptors," *Chautauquan* 22 (January 1896): 391.

³ Kenyon Cox, "In Memory of Saint-Gaudens," *Architectural Record* 22 (October 1907): 249.

⁴ [Clarence Cook], "National Academy of Design: Fortieth Annual Exhibition," *New York Daily Tribune*, 13 May 1865, 9.

⁵ Linda Jones Docherty, "A Search for Identity: American Art Criticism and the Concept of the 'Native School,' 1876-1893" (Ph.D. diss., University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, 1985), 66.

⁶ Saint-Gaudens to Mr. and Mrs. Thomas J. Homer (his in-laws), 26 September 1877, Augustus Saint-Gaudens Papers, Dartmouth College Library, Hanover, New Hampshire, microfilm reel 17, frame 440 (hereafter cited as Saint-Gaudens Papers, DCL).

⁷ Most useful are: Margaret C. Conrads, "Winslow Homer and His Critics in the 1870s" (Ph.D. diss., City University of New York, 1999); Marc Simpson, "Eakins's Vision of the Past and the Building of a Reputation," in Darrel Sewell, ed., *Thomas Eakins*, exh. cat. (Philadelphia: Philadelphia Museum of Art in association with Yale University Press, 2001), 211-23; Marc Simpson, with Richard Ormond and H. Barbara Weinberg, *Uncanny Spectacle: The Public Career of the Young John Singer Sargent*, exh. cat. (New Haven and London: Yale University Press; Williamstown, Mass.: Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute, 1997); and Saul E. Zalesch, "Ryder Among the Writers: Friendship and Patronage in the New York Art World, 1875-1884" (Ph.D. diss., University of Delaware, 1992).

⁸ Extremely helpful in this search were: Mary Morris Schmidt, *Index to Nineteenth Century American Art Periodicals*, 2 vols. (Madison, Conn.: Sound View Press, 1999); and Helene Emylou Roberts, "American Art Periodicals of the Nineteenth Century" (Master's thesis, University of Washington, Seattle, 1961).

⁹ See Jo Ann W. Weiss, "Clarence Cook: His Critical Writings" (Ph.D. diss., Johns Hopkins University, 1977); Rosamund Gilder, ed. *Letters of Richard Watson Gilder* (Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1916); Arthur John, *The Best Years of the "Century": Richard Watson Gilder, Scribner's Monthly, and Century Magazine, 1870-1909* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1981); Herbert F. Smith, *Richard Watson Gilder* (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1970); Lois Dinnerstein, "Opulence and Ocular Delight, Splendor and Squalor: Critical Writings in Art and Architecture by

Mariana Van Rensselaer" (Ph.D. diss., City University of New York, 1979); Cynthia D. Kinnard, "The Life and Works of Mariana Griswold Van Rensselaer, American Art Critic" (Ph.D. diss., Johns Hopkins University, 1977); H. Wayne Morgan, *Keepers of Culture: The Art-Thought of Kenyon Cox, Royal Cortissoz, and Frank Jewett Mather, Jr.* (Kent, Ohio, and London: Kent State University Press, 1989); H. Wayne Morgan, *Kenyon Cox, 1856-1919: A Life in American Art* (Kent, Ohio, and London: Kent State University Press, 1994); H. Wayne Morgan, ed., *An American Art Student in Paris: The Letters of Kenyon Cox, 1877-1882* (Kent, Ohio, and London: Kent State University Press, 1986); and H. Wayne Morgan, ed., *An Artist of the American Renaissance: The Letters of Kenyon Cox, 1883-1919* (Kent, Ohio, and London: Kent State University Press, 1995).

¹⁰ David Dearing, ed., *Rave Reviews: American Art and Its Critics, 1826-1925*, exh. cat. (New York: National Academy of Design, 2000); and Jennifer A. Martin Bienenstock, "The Formation and Early Years of the Society of American Artists: 1877-1884" (Ph.D. diss., City University of New York, 1983). Also useful was John P. Simoni, "Art Critics and Criticism in Nineteenth Century America" (Ph.D. diss., Ohio State University, 1952).

¹¹ Homer Saint-Gaudens, ed., *The Reminiscences of Augustus Saint-Gaudens*, 2 vols. (New York: Century Co., 1913).

¹² Louise Hall Tharp, *Saint-Gaudens and the Gilded Era* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1969); and Burke Wilkinson, *Uncommon Clay: The Life and Works of Augustus Saint-Gaudens* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1985).

¹³ Margaret Bouton, "The Early Works of Augustus Saint-Gaudens" (Ph.D. diss., Radcliffe College, 1946).

¹⁴ John H. Dryfhout and Beverly Cox, *Augustus Saint-Gaudens: The Portrait Reliefs*, exh. cat. (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution for the National Portrait Gallery, 1969).

¹⁵ John H. Dryfhout, *The Work of Augustus Saint-Gaudens* (Hanover, N.H.: University Press of New England, 1982).

¹⁶ Kathryn Greenthal, *Augustus Saint-Gaudens: Master Sculptor*, exh. cat. (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1985); and *Augustus Saint-Gaudens, 1848-1907: A Master of American Sculpture*, exh. cat. (Paris: Somogy Éditions d'Art, 1999).

¹⁷ Lois Goldreich Marcus, "Studies in Nineteenth-Century American Sculpture: Augustus Saint-Gaudens (1848-1907)" (Ph.D. diss., City University of New York, 1979); Cynthia J. Mills, "The Adams Memorial and American Funerary Sculpture, 1891-1927" (Ph.D. diss., University of Maryland at College Park, 1996); and Joyce Karen Schiller, "The Artistic Collaboration of Augustus Saint-Gaudens and Stanford White" (Ph.D. diss., Washington University, Saint Louis, 1997). Also deserving of mention is *The Shaw Memorial: A Celebration of an American Masterpiece* (Cornish, N.H.: Eastern National for Saint-Gaudens National Historic Site, 2002).

¹⁸ That said, I reference Boston, Chicago, and Philadelphia newspapers in conjunction with Saint-Gaudens's showings in those cities.

¹⁹ Saint-Gaudens to Will H. Low, 8 September 1899 (typescript copy), Saint-Gaudens Papers, DCL, microfilm reel 9, frame 822.

Chapter 1

Saint-Gaudens and the Critics

Following the Civil War, the professionalization of American sculptors and the growing importance of the fine arts in the cultural life of this nation coincided with the specialization of the discipline of art criticism. During the 1870s, the art critic or editor became a formalized position on newspaper staffs, while concurrently the number of specialized publications devoted to the fine and decorative arts proliferated.¹ For sculptors, the press corps' contributions in words and deeds extended far beyond their published reception of and reaction to three-dimensional imagery. Despite the plurality of critical voices and their divergent opinions, collectively these writers were of inestimable value in the last quarter of the nineteenth century in articulating and legitimizing the concept of a home-based American school of sculpture.

For this reason and others, it is important to look at Augustus Saint-Gaudens, his work, and his relationship with critics and other sculptors using the annual exhibitions of art organizations as an armature. As the recent exhibition, *Rave Reviews: American Art and Its Critics, 1826-1925*, and its accompanying catalogue, demonstrated convincingly, "the history of American art criticism is directly linked to the history of annual exhibitions in this country."² From the inception of the National Academy of Design annuals in 1826, critical writing on sculpture in conjunction with these exhibitions reflected the inconsistent and/or marginal attention devoted to this medium. Prior to the Civil War, the Academy annuals averaged four to five sculptures an exhibition;³ some years none appeared (1846, for instance), while occasionally it was plentiful (as in 1850,

when Henry Kirke Brown showed thirteen sculptures out of a total seventeen). In an 1874 review of the annual for the *Daily Tribune*, Clarence Cook contemptuously acknowledged this dearth when turning to the three-dimensional submissions: “We suppose we must not hope to have any sculpture in the Sculpture Room. We fare better this year than for many years back with three busts, one by Ward, one by [Charles] Calverly [sic], and one by Launt Thompson; but, though these are clever characteristic works they cannot redeem the room from the reproach of emptiness, and worse than emptiness.”⁴ Cook’s reference to three New York-based sculptors raises a second issue: the works shown at the Academy between the 1840s and early 1870s were not cumulatively representative of American sculptural production. They were not usually the ideal marble productions of the expatriate American school,⁵ but more often the portrait work of local New York sculptors. Further, better-known sculptors such as Academicians Brown and John Quincy Adams Ward exhibited inconsistently, since prestigious commissions for public sculpture took precedence.⁶ Thus, despite serving as New York’s premier venue for the display and sale of art, the Academy’s commitment to presenting sculpture was random at best, complicated by the paucity of local artists and to logistical problems attendant to the display, lighting, and shipping of three-dimensional works.

The habitually lackluster quality of the sculpture resulted in the establishment of indifferent critical response. First, if critics chose to address the sculpture at all, the commentary was most often relegated to the end of reviews in journals and especially in newspapers, the most important source of exhibition reviews. Further, writers devoted far fewer column inches to sculpture than to paintings despite the rapid growth of art

coverage in the 1870s. Admittedly, this bias may be explained, in part, by the greater number of paintings than sculpture and the concomitant public appreciation for (and ready comprehension of) paintings over sculpture. Secondly, perhaps in frustration with the endemic dearth of sculpture or perhaps less at ease with this three-dimensional medium, writers were often unforgiving, even vicious in their assessments. The *New York Times* writer's reaction to the sculpture in the 1865 annual is not atypical:

The Sculpture Room is hardly worth referring to, so poor is the collection. When the visitor has glanced at the 'medallion portraits' by ED. J. KUNTZE . . . , at LAUNT THOMPSON'S plaster bust of "W. C. Bryant," . . . and at his delicate head of "Daisy," . . . we advise him, the visitor, to press his hat upon his head and rush--joyfully, if he may, but wrathfully, if he must--from the building.⁷

That progress in the plastic arts, or the lack thereof, was continuously on the minds of the critics, is evidenced by an unsigned review of the 1874 Academy annual, the year before Saint-Gaudens first exhibited there: "As a whole . . . the Statuary Room shows a total absence of anything evincing progress in this direction."⁸

Writers and the American School of Sculpture

Although American sculpture was not widely or positively assessed in the context of the Academy annuals, the expatriate American sculptors working in Florence and Rome earned consistent attention in periodicals through surveys of their works and their whereabouts. One-work sculpture exhibitions in New York in the 1840s and 1850s also generated a large degree of publicity. They attracted throngs of paying viewers, the marbles themselves forms of dramatic entertainment and spectacle on the one hand and examples of moral instruction and proper aesthetic taste on the other. Among the most

noteworthy showings in New York were Henry Kirke Brown's solo exhibition of fifteen works at the National Academy of Design in 1846; Hiram Powers's *Greek Slave* (1841-43; 1847, The Newark Museum, Newark, N.J.) in New York in 1847-48 and 1849; Edward Augustus Brackett's *Shipwrecked Mother and Child* (1850; Worcester Art Museum, Worcester, Mass.) in 1852; and Erastus Dow Palmer's *The White Captive* (1857-59; The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York) in 1859-60.⁹ These exhibitions, which were strenuously promoted in the newspapers, attracted extensive critical notice, some engaging in spirited debates about the ever-controversial issue of nudity.

The progress of American sculpture and the notion of a developing national school was the principal subject or a component of several mid-century book-length studies and numerous articles in newspapers and general-interest journals. In 1850 Pickering Dodge published his *Sculpture and Plastic Art*, a review of sculpture from ancient times to the present, with the final chapter devoted to Central, South, and North American sculpture.¹⁰ Dodge offered brief descriptions of the accomplishments of stay-at-home and expatriate American sculptors, demonstrating a special interest in the late Shobal Vail Clevenger. Dodge noted: "It is foreign to our purpose to attempt anything like a criticism of the works of living American sculptors,"¹¹ and indeed his writing is entirely descriptive rather than analytical. He subscribed to the commonly held view that American sculpture was in an infant state because until now utilitarian concerns had predominated. Dodge observed "a taste for sculpture . . . thanks to national enterprise and perseverance, is rapidly increasing amongst us"¹² and predicted that the next half-century would bring cultivation in the arts.

Hannah Farnham Sawyer Lee followed a similar model in her two-volume *Familiar Sketches of Sculpture and Sculptors* of 1854, devoting a lengthy discussion of some 120 pages to the Americans. Bostonians Horatio Greenough, Henry Dexter, and John C. King each earned separate chapters, as did the women sculptors, including Harriet Hosmer.¹³ Lee agreed with Dodge that art should adorn a simple life, but the tone of her writing, couched in nationalistic terms, was far more philosophical. Much of her content was drawn from William Dunlap's *History of the Rise and Progress of the Arts of Design in the United States* (1834), other mid-century publications, and autobiographical sketches contributed by the artists. To Lee, American sculpture offered an analogy to "a frail canoe launched on a river . . . but we trust it will be followed by noble steam-vessels."¹⁴ This transformation would only occur when the country's wealth allowed expenditures on the arts ("hundreds of thousands on Sculpture and Sculptors"), enabling "another Phidias to crown the New World with glory."¹⁵ Ideally then this new Phidias would, through his superior talent, usher in an era of improved popular taste in the fine arts.

Such rhetoric encouraging a flowering of American sculpture continued in the 1860s and early 1870s. James Jackson Jarves published *The Art-Idea* in 1864, one of his several art treatises, in which he adopted a far more worldly view than either Dodge or Lee. Jarves had settled in Florence in 1852, becoming a passionate collector of paintings by early Italian masters and earning a broad knowledge of neoclassical sculpture. In his chapter on American sculpture, he acknowledged that much had been accomplished to establish the field: "A people whose school of sculpture, commencing in a Greenough, in less than one generation gives rise to artists of the varied calibre of Ward, John Rogers,

and [William Wetmore] Story, has not occasion to envy the progress of other nations in the same space of time.”¹⁶ Still, Jarves believed that the United States had as of yet produced no great sculpture. To do that, he argued, one had to look to “the standards of those masters whose genius elevates them far above the narrow limits of nationalities.”¹⁷ This statement correlates with Jarves’s belief that in order to produce a national art, artists must synthesize both foreign and national influences, a concept that earned popular currency with late nineteenth-century critics,¹⁸ and one that Saint-Gaudens embodied.

Henry T. Tuckerman’s *Book of the Artists: American Artist Life* was published in 1867. His incisive chapter on American sculptors was the most extensive and detailed to date, and offered a balanced, interwoven consideration of the native and expatriate schools, including even minor artists. Tuckerman expressed optimism for the future of a medium that he saw as “peculiarly congenial to American genius, remarkably adapted to the artistic needs of the country, and destined to achieve original triumphs abroad.”¹⁹ He felt confident that sculpture would reach a level of national expression once artists had moved beyond hackneyed themes and mined the rich lode of American history and heroes for their subject matter.

One more sculpture survey from the early 1870s deserves mention. Clarence Cook translated Louis Viardot’s *Wonders of Sculpture* (1873) and provided a supplementary chapter on American sculpture.²⁰ Cook’s lengthy analysis of the history of American sculpture was far more workmanlike and derivative than his subjective and often biting art criticism for the *New York Daily Tribune*. He attributed the lack of progress in American sculpture in the early history of the nation to its status as luxury object. He progressed through the varied likes of Guiseppe Ceracchi, John Dixey, and

John Frazee before arriving at the triumvirate of Greenough, Hiram Powers, and Thomas Crawford. Cook wrote sympathetically of Greenough and Crawford, but less so of Powers, reserving his praise for his portrait busts rather than such ideal groups as *The Greek Slave*. Cook, however, devoted far more attention to stay-at-home sculptors such as Brown, Dexter, Ward, and Palmer. He admired the naturalism of Brown's equestrian statue of George Washington (1853-56; Union Square, New York) while disparaging the idealized mannerism of Palmer's large works such as the *Indian Girl* or *The Dawn of Christianity* (1853-56; The Metropolitan Museum of Art) or *The White Captive*. Likewise, while acknowledging the limitations of John Rogers's realistic genre statuettes, Cook allowed that "they are certainly a godsend to the public with small means to expend on works of art that has so long been wearily stranded on the abominable casts of Venuses and Apollos with the Canova Graces."²¹ While Cook maintained a fairly objective stance throughout the chapter, he offered no major prescriptives for the future of American sculpture.

With the advent of the specialized periodical *The Crayon* in 1855, critical writing on art began to take on a more serious and philosophical tone.²² This journal, which was in circulation until 1861, published informed articles on sculpture as well as items of interest about sculptors in the foreign and domestic art gossip columns. Most notably, it promoted the Albany-based neoclassicist Palmer, a crony of the journal's editors William J. Stillman and John Durand. Palmer wrote for *The Crayon* as well, publishing in 1856 his "Philosophy of the Ideal," in which he stated that art must rest on intellectual or moral foundations to result in excellence.²³ His manifesto that art serve as a vehicle for higher

ideas, of course, stands in antithesis to the subjective naturalism of such Beaux-Arts trained Americans as Saint-Gaudens.

The definition of an American school of sculpture changed markedly during the second two quarters of the nineteenth century. In the 1850s and 1860s, nationalistic critics set up a polarity between the stay-at-homes and the expatriate sculptors. To these writers, those artists working at home—Brown, Ward, and Palmer—were seen as the most representative American sculptors because they were the least influenced by foreign art. Palmer's work in particular offered critics a platform on which to discourse about nationalism in American sculpture. That he, like his friend Frederic Edwin Church, had in 1859 not yet been abroad to study was evidence of "the product of American civilization and culture . . . developments of American genius; manifestations of American character."²⁴ Nationalism in this context was a reflection of home-based training and original subjects, a proud refutation of European models and influence. In 1863, a patriotic article in the *Round Table* acknowledged this division of Old and New World-based plastic talent. It saluted Palmer's independence, Brown's intellect, and Ward's grandeur of conception, and then observed: "Of Crawford, Story, and Powers, and others, we cannot now write. Their art culture is that of Europe, and the tone of their genius has been too much influenced by life abroad to accept them as representative men in *American art*."²⁵

By the late 1860s and early 1870s, as critical interest in sculpture grew, so did suggestions as to how to best bring about a truly national school of sculpture. Complaints escalated about the inaccessibility of the expatriate school of American sculptors and the lack of relation of their subject matter to American life. If a main function of sculpture

was to uplift, edify, and moralize, critics often found little correspondence between American life and subjects drawn from mythology and literature. Artists were called upon to produce subjects from which the public could readily draw meaning. This sentiment escalated in post-Civil War years as a demand for public monuments to commemorate fallen heroes replaced that for representations of a private ideal nature. Further, when material prosperity occurred through rapid industrialization and improvements in transportation and communications, it was to the arts that writers turned as a source for Americanized moral directives against the excesses of this new and conspicuous postbellum wealth. In effecting these changes, some writers adopted a particularly chauvinistic tone bordering on xenophobia. For example, Rodman J. Scheirr wrote in 1876, the year of the American centennial:

Of late years, some of our American sculptors have been learning the practical wisdom of imbibing the American sentiment. . . . I cannot help but feel a special delight when I see an American subject, treated by an American master-artist, the result being an American masterpiece which appeals not only to my critical taste as an art connoisseur, but to my inmost national feeling, my mind and heart, as an American.²⁶

Other writers identified the lack of adequate arts education in this country as the reason for the lack of American sculptural progress, arguing that improvements would behoove not only sculptors but lead to a better-informed public. A survey of American sculpture published in the *Atlantic Monthly* in 1868 argued the point that there was already “genius enough in America to furnish a school equal to the Greeks.” Once educational opportunities improved, so too would technique and criticism:

The knowledge thus gained would change the character of plastic art in this country. Endowing the public to appreciate what is now obscure in the best art, and also to detect blunders in means and execution, it would soon do away with meaningless puffery, and obstinate fault-finding, substituting for these

kind and careful criticism. Thus the great power of artists like Greenough, Crawford, Story, and Powers would be utilized and sculpture could no longer be called an anachronism in America.²⁷

In the course of redefining the larger purpose and meaning of American sculpture between 1870 and 1880, a younger, progressive generation of critics and sculptors rejected the accomplishments of most earlier American sculptors—both those at home and abroad—and looked to Europe, especially France, to create a new history and identity. Unlike the American expatriates of Florence and Rome, however, this group of artists, including Saint-Gaudens, followed the model of Brown by obtaining quality artistic training abroad and returning to the United States to practice their profession and to assimilate American themes into their art. The new school of American sculptors aligned themselves with their European masters and up-to-date techniques in order to refute charges of American artistic provincialism.²⁸ At the same time they redirected the materials of sculpture away from Italian marble to the more inexpensive and industrial bronze, a medium more suited to the lively French-inspired aesthetic. By the late 1840s the pro-nationalist Brown was promoting bronze as a particularly American medium, hailed for its democratic overtones and its independence from European models, materials, and labor.

Saint-Gaudens and the Making of an Artist

As there were changes in the parameters of an American school of sculpture—a collective of individual creators with similar goals—so too were there changes in the presentation of the American artist as an individual persona in late-nineteenth-century

society. Part of that perception rested with how the media made and portrayed artists; natural talent represented only one component of their reputations. Recently Sarah Burns has examined how artistic identity and fame in late nineteenth century were to a large extent manufactured commodities.²⁹ In addition to their art, artists themselves became products, and their media-fabricated personalities as much as their creations determined how the public responded to them. Of this artist-critic dynamic, Burns has observed: “Artists acted in the construction of their own images, just as much as they waited to be acted upon by the image makers. Most often, the public figure represented some blending of the two.”³⁰ Such was certainly Saint-Gaudens’s case. An older generation of artists affiliated with the National Academy of Design were particularly critical of this reputation brokering between the younger artists and writers, especially during the 1870s and 1880s. Such alliances prompted the German-born genre painter Louis Lang in 1885 to complain to Henry Kirke Brown: “The press, who consist of young men . . . have enough to do to visit and praise the new school of young Paris students. . . . In the next 20 years we will have no other than French art!”³¹

Saint-Gaudens’s confidence in, and perception of, himself were in large measure responsible for his early acceptance and ongoing alignment with an inner circle of critical devotees. While the Gaelic-Gallic sculptor possessed none of the blue-blood breeding of his advocates, he did not outwardly view his “mixed racial equipment,”³² in Royal Cortissoz’s words, as detrimental, although at the same time he acknowledged his less cultivated class status. Saint-Gaudens’s French name and up-to-date Parisian training overrode his socially less acceptable Irish roots and enhanced his cosmopolitan image. He was charming, charismatic, and physically attractive. Further, by all accounts,

including his own, the sculptor possessed an unusual degree of self-assurance. Statements from his 1906 draft for his reminiscences bear this out, in spite of seeming to border on youthful arrogance or exaggeration. For instance, of his commission for interior work in the Cornelius Vanderbilt II mansion in the early 1880s, Saint-Gaudens wrote that the architect “Mr. [George B.] Post evidently had the same confidence in me that I had in myself. Wherefore I undertook the task in the belief that here again I was going to reform things in matters of that kind in this country.”³³

As I discuss extensively in Chapter 2, Saint-Gaudens was unwaveringly focused in the early years of his career on establishing and marketing his credentials in New York’s social and artistic circles. He eagerly learned appropriate social mores from his wife Augusta Homer and closest friends like Stanford White to improve his chances of success in the shifting and expanding worlds of art patronage, commissions, and sales. From his exposure to the vibrant Anglo-American artist colony in Rome and his courting of those associated with the *Admiral David Glasgow Farragut Monument* commission in New York, the sculptor understood the importance of participating in social and cultural activities and maintaining a public face with those who held money and authority. Although not a tremendously outgoing individual, Saint-Gaudens possessed an incongruous quality one client described as “assertive modesty.”³⁴ Throughout the 1880s and 1890s, as his social framework and acceptance expanded, he became increasingly at ease in the most sophisticated circles, indeed he stood as a towering and central presence. Among his eclectic group of friends were presidents (Grover Cleveland and Theodore Roosevelt), authors (Henry James and William Dean Howells), and the socially-connected (Henry Adams and Elizabeth Cameron). The sculptor’s brother, Louis, a

sculptor himself, remarked in 1902: "There is one thing about him that I am sure of, and that is that he is happy among rich people, I have never seen him in a bad temper when he was in their company. I don't mean this in any unkindness. He has a right to be happy, and if he does like to curry favor with the rich like a flunkey, it is a very unimportant sin",³⁵

Saint-Gaudens's awareness of the potential influence of critics in shaping public perception of his career and persona is more readily understood in the context of his great professional ambition and personal assurance. The sculptor's interactions with the critics differed from those with the old and new money business elite connected with his monumental commissions. The writers with whom the sculptor associated were often trusted friends, and their relationships reflected intense personal loyalties and similar aesthetic concerns. Saint-Gaudens forged lasting relationships with the likes of Richard Watson Gilder, Charles de Kay, Mariana Griswold Van Rensselaer, and Kenyon Cox in the mid-1870s and early 1880s while his social circle was still relatively closed. These writers were formative not only in promoting Saint-Gaudens's career publicly, but also in opening doors by deliberately introducing him to other influential literati, intellectuals, and artists. The significance of the sculptor's capacity for friendship with these critics cannot be overstated in relation to his artistic and professional development.

Richard Watson Gilder

Between 1875 and 1877, while he was establishing himself in New York, Saint-Gaudens developed a lifelong friendship with Richard Watson Gilder, editor, poet, and civic

activist. This alliance was bound by a shared mission to improve the status of arts in the United States. When Gilder's myriad accomplishments were saluted in *Century Magazine* in February 1910, Cecilia Beaux singled out his relationship with Saint-Gaudens to the exclusion of all other fine artists. She observed, "he was an early and close friend of Saint-Gaudens, whose genius he recognized at first view."³⁶

The men first met soon after Saint-Gaudens returned from Europe in 1875, but the actual chronology is sketchy. As the sculptor reminded Gilder in 1902: "the first time I met you you made one of the ineffaceable impressions on me that stick out in our lives I was going down the stairs of the entrance to the Fourteenth Street Building (German Savings Bank) and you were coming along from Fourteenth Street with [Wyatt] Eaton, I believe."³⁷ From then on Gilder opened private and public doors to Saint-Gaudens, gaining him entrée into New York's genteel social structure. He was the career-long gatekeeper of Saint-Gaudens's reputation, advising the artist on strategy for publicity and promoting his potential and accomplishments first in the pages of *Scribner's Monthly* and then in *Century Illustrated Monthly Magazine* where he served as editor from 1881 until his death in 1909.

Four years Saint-Gaudens's elder, Gilder was born in 1844 in Bordentown, New Jersey, the son of a Methodist minister descended from colonial stock.³⁸ He began his career in journalism as a reporter for the *Newark (N.J.) Daily Advertiser*, and in 1869 was a founder of the *Newark Morning Register*. Concurrently he edited *Hours at Home*, a Scribner publication, which in 1870 merged with the new *Scribner's Monthly*. Gilder served as assistant to its editor Josiah Gilbert Holland, assuming increased responsibilities and control as Holland's health declined. During the 1870s Gilder

converted *Scribner's* into the most influential of the general-interest monthlies, writing "The Old Cabinet" editorial commentary until his departure for an extended European sojourn in 1879-80. This success continued when *Scribner's* changed its name to *Century Illustrated Monthly Magazine* in November 1881. During Gilder's long affiliation with this publication, his eclectic interests were reflected in the content of its pages. Gilder helped to create the reputations of such authors as George Washington Cable, William Dean Howells, and Mark Twain by serializing their writings in the *Century*. In addition to his editorial pursuits, Gilder was a poet of moderate ability, publishing numerous volumes, including *The New Day* (1875) and *Five Books of Song* (1894). His public interests extended to deep involvement with issues of civic welfare and reform. He worked tirelessly for the introduction of copyright legislation through the American Copyright League. Gilder also was concerned with improving tenement living conditions and served as chairman of the Tenement House Committee in 1894. Thus, his social pursuits were intended to benefit a broad class spectrum, though Gilder himself was firmly rooted in an idealistic genteel culture.

Saint-Gaudens also befriended Gilder's wife, Helena de Kay, a sister of writer and critic Charles de Kay.³⁹ She had studied informally with John La Farge and Winslow Homer in the early 1870s. Although a proficient figure and still-life painter and illustrator during the 1870s and early 1880s,⁴⁰ her significance lies to a greater extent in her position as a "salon" hostess and in her active fostering of the young new movement artists who espoused recent currents in European art that stressed inventive composition, liberal expression of mood, and freer technique. Specifically, de Kay played integral roles in the founding of alternative organizations, the Art Students League in 1875 and the Society of

American Artists in 1877, each established to redress problems with the National Academy of Design's programs and policies. She enjoyed prominent social standing, with ancestral roots in Knickerbocker New York. Her great-grandfather Henry Eckford was a ship builder; her maternal grandfather Joseph Rodman Drake was a well-known poet; and her father Commodore George Coleman de Kay was a distinguished naval officer. Her cosmopolitan upbringing included several years as a child in Dresden where she not only studied German, French, and Italian, but also developed a passion for the Old Masters and Barbizon school artists. Like Saint-Gaudens, de Kay studied at the Cooper Union and at the National Academy and benefited from La Farge's artistic mentoring; when, however, the two artists met is not documented. Their tenures at the two institutions did not overlap, save for perhaps briefly during 1866 at the Cooper Union. Further, the patrician de Kay attended day classes and Saint-Gaudens—because of his employment as a cameo cutter's assistant—evening ones.

De Kay's marriage to Gilder in June 1874 effectively created a social nucleus for the new movement artists as well as like-minded writers and musicians. A mutual conviction that exposure to great art and literature improved taste and morality made the couple among the leading representatives of New York's genteel tradition and advocates for a new definition of national art. Secure in their own social standing, the Gilders held the power to confirm or deny social and artistic approbation. At the same time, they possessed an unusual degree of sympathy for individuals who did not fit the genteel mold but possessed raw talent, including Saint-Gaudens, the painter Albert Pinkham Ryder, and the poet Walt Whitman. Whitman later recalled: "You must never forget this of the Gilders, that at a time when most everybody else in their set threw me down they were

noble and unhesitatingly hospitable. The Gilders were without pride and without shame—they just asked me along in a natural way.”⁴¹

The Gilders’ house at 103 East Fifteenth Street, known as “The Studio,” was a former stable that was renovated by Stanford White in 1882. From the time of the Gilder’s marriage, it was an informal weekly salon for writers and avant-garde, usually foreign-trained artists, fulfilling a need for spirited intellectual discourse.⁴² Among those in attendance over the next few years were painters Eaton, La Farge, and Will H. Low; sculptors Saint-Gaudens and Daniel Chester French; writers Howells, James, Twain, and Whitman; and actors Madame Helena Modjeska and Joseph Jefferson. For artists returning from years of study in Europe, “The Studio” was a cosmopolitan meeting place, a bridge between worldly European art and culture and the realities of American artistic provincialism. Low captured the contemporary sentiment of the progressive artists when he referred to this cultured salon as “an oasis in the first few years after the return to our desert home, as it appeared in comparison with the more flowering regions of art whence we came.”⁴³ Although any written recollections by Saint-Gaudens of these evening meetings have not survived, if they ever existed, the Gilders and their salon were of inestimable value to a career that so depended on the cultivation of useful relationships for prospective sculptural commissions.

The complexities of the Gilders’ own social perceptions are beyond the scope of this dissertation, but in the largest sense, they were among a weakened gentrified circle of New Yorkers that was eclipsed in the post-Civil War years by a commerce-oriented nouveau-riche class that obtained social and cultural status through money.⁴⁴ What the Gilders lacked in financial resources, they compensated for in their belief that education,

genealogy, and good breeding, not vast fortunes, entitled one to the important commodities of refinement and taste. Along with the advent of American art museums as instruments of culture in the 1870s, publications of *Century*'s ilk defined a new relationship between a work of art and its audience by educating and forming correct taste in the name of society's larger and more unified good. This imperative to foster good taste among the broad masses had an outwardly democratic slant that meshed with Gilder's other civic involvements. Yet in reality, Gilder's idealistic mission was flawed, not only because his audience was largely middle- and upper-middle class (not immigrant and working class) and his magazine's circulation an isolated fraction of the American population, but also because he himself hand-selected and rejected what constituted aesthetic prerogative by empowering or discarding young artists and writers through association and/or publication.

In addition to social access on a gentrified professional level, there are innumerable other instances in which Gilder smoothed or celebrated the progress of Saint-Gaudens's career. During a European sojourn in 1878-79, Gilder provided research assistance for the sculptor's work on the *Robert Richard Randall Memorial* (fig. 45). He even served as a model for the legs of the *Farragut* statue.⁴⁵ Probably at Saint-Gaudens's behest, Gilder and Charles de Kay collaborated to improve the inscription by Richard Grant White, father of Stanford, intended for the exedra base of the *Farragut*. As de Kay noted to his brother-in-law: "I have brassed it up to send him this for his 'eternal brass'. . . What think you? Have you any suggestions?"⁴⁶ Following the unveiling of the monument on May 25, 1881, the Gilders hosted a festive dinner in the sculptor's honor. Among the other works by Saint-Gaudens in which Gilder played a facilitating role were

the *Standing Lincoln* (fig. 49) for which he helped select passages from Lincoln's speeches and compose inscriptions. Gilder also sat on the Committee on Art and Exhibition of Washington Centennial Committee, and was on the subcommittee responsible for commissioning the *George Washington Inaugural Centennial Medal* (1889; The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York).⁴⁷ And when the National Sculpture Society was founded in 1893, Gilder was its treasurer while Saint-Gaudens was among the sculptors, architects, and patrons named to the executive committee.

In turn, Saint-Gaudens provided Gilder with practical artistic assistance. For instance, Saint-Gaudens created a drawing after Paul Dubois's seated sculpture *Faith* (fig. 1) that was engraved for an article by Russell Sturgis on the 1878 Paris Exposition Universelle published in the June 1879 issue of *Scribner's Monthly*.⁴⁸ Saint-Gaudens was never a particularly deft draftsman, but the pencil drawing is a competent rendering after a work by an artist whom he deeply admired. In 1880, Saint-Gaudens may have assisted White in redesigning the cover for *Scribner's Monthly*, producing an architecturally-oriented classic scroll design.⁴⁹ And, in 1888, Saint-Gaudens helped the Gilders, who had recently moved to a new home on East Eighth Street, to select a cast after Donatello to place above their parlor mantelpiece.⁵⁰

That Gilder and Saint-Gaudens possessed a genuine and enduring appreciation for each other is evident. In July 1905, a month after Saint-Gaudens was fêted in celebration of twenty years of residence among the Cornish colony of artists, he wrote to Gilder from New Hampshire: "As years advance I count it one of the good things in my life to have known you and had your friendship. Your reference to me and my work makes me bow my head, for you see with the beautifying eyes of affection and I feel very humble at such

appreciation.”⁵¹ Following Saint-Gaudens’s death in August 1907, Gilder wrote to Beaux: “This is an immense loss to H[elena] and myself. Our lives have been entwined with him and his art.”⁵² Gilder then served on the Saint-Gaudens Memorial Committee, which organized the artist’s memorial exhibition for the Metropolitan Museum of Art and four subsequent venues. At the same time that the exhibition opened at the Metropolitan in March 1908 Gilder presented a eulogy, “Music Beneath the Stars,” at Mendelssohn Hall and published these sonnets in Saint-Gaudens’s memory in the *Atlantic Monthly*.⁵³

Gilder’s warm relationship with Saint-Gaudens however possessed an element of territorialism that was recognized by other sculptors and critics, and undeniably inspired frustration or jealousy. As far as other American sculptors were concerned, Saint-Gaudens had an exclusive hold on Gilder’s pen as his chosen sculptor representative to explicate new movement ideals. Even the consummately tactful Daniel Chester French ruefully alluded to Gilder’s ability to confirm or deny artistic reputations through his powerful editorial and social posts. Speaking of Saint-Gaudens and such European-trained painters Thomas Wilmer Dewing, William Merritt Chase, and J. Alden Weir, French tellingly noted: “When this great array of talent . . . arrived from Europe, *The Century Magazine* under Richard Watson Gilder took them up and ‘made’ them on the spot. My course was of necessity a bit more arduous.”⁵⁴ French acknowledged in 1886: “I should like very much to be written up in the Century, but [I] doubt if Mr. Gilder would do it. St. Gaudens is his man.”⁵⁵ It was not until 1903 that French had his first notice in the *Century*, an article by William A. Coffin.⁵⁶ Other sculptors maintained a hands-off approach to the Gilder-*Century* orbit. Apparently Olin Levi Warner initially declined a request by Gilder to complete a portrait medallion of the editor’s deceased infant

daughter for the exterior of “The Studio,” “because I won’t mix up with the work of St. Gaudens who is also doing something for Gilder.”⁵⁷ By 1880 Warner had relented.⁵⁸ The sculptor and writer Truman Howe Bartlett was even less diplomatic in his assessment of this particular artist-critic dynamic, and spitefully referred to Gilder as Saint-Gaudens’s “trumpeter.”⁵⁹

Clarence Cook

For a limited time, Clarence Cook, to borrow Bartlett’s double-edged word, was also a “trumpeter” for Saint-Gaudens. Cook’s decisive role in developing late-nineteenth-century professional art criticism by creating a distinct voice and aesthetic identity as well as an individual power base is widely acknowledged.⁶⁰ Cook was a generation older than other critics who championed the sculptor. Born in Dorchester, Massachusetts, he graduated from Harvard College in 1849. His long and prolific career as an art critic began in tandem with his poetry writing, which he pursued most intensely in the early 1850s. During this decade Cook wrote for the *Independent* as well as taught and lectured. His early dedication to English Pre-Raphaelite and Ruskinian aesthetic ideals stemmed from his involvement with Russell Sturgis and others in the founding of the Society for the Advancement of Truth for Art in 1863 and the editorship of its house journal, *The New Path* (1863-64).⁶¹

In 1864 Cook became art critic for the *Daily Tribune*, a position he maintained with several interruptions until 1883. During his tenure for the *Tribune*, Cook introduced a forthright, incisive, and sometimes scathing, style of criticism that was an antidote to

the blind, undiscerning praise that characterized much of mid-nineteenth century art writing. His bold and stimulating articles pleased the public and frequently drew rancor from artists who were subject to his vindictive attacks, which were often as much personal as professional. He did not spare the rod with fellow critics either. For instance, in 1878 he called William C. Brownell “a little man who has never been out of New York and writes about art at La Farge’s dictation,” while in 1883 he lambasted Van Rensselaer’s critical principles in a lengthy published diatribe.⁶² Unlike Gilder or Van Rensselaer, Cook sought to reform public taste and improve artistic standards largely through reproachful negatives rather than propagandistic positives. Cook’s dismissal from the *Daily Tribune* in 1883 resulted in large part from his vociferous opposition to Metropolitan Museum of Art director General Luigi Palma di Cesnola over the issue of the authenticity of Cypriot antiquities that Cesnola had acquired for the museum. In addition to writing for the *Art Amateur* from 1881 to 1884,⁶³ Cook resuscitated and transformed *The Studio* into an art journal in 1883. He edited *The Studio* and penned much of its content with his distinctive flair and flavor until his retirement in 1893 or 1894.⁶⁴

Cook’s taste was eclectic and sometimes contradictory—he reversed his opinion on European influence on American artists from believing it had no validity to arguing for the necessity of its general emulation. His transformation from an advocate of Pre-Raphaelite strictures of truth to nature to more subjective and imaginative expressions occurred following time in Paris as the *Tribune*’s correspondent in 1869-70. By the time that the new movement artists brought about their ‘revolution’ in the late 1870s, Cook projected the talent and experience to advocate on behalf of these younger voices. His

disenchantment with the Academy and its principles was evident for many years before he aligned himself with the younger, and generally foreign-trained, artists; it continued unabated for several years after his role in the founding of the Society of American Artists.⁶⁵ Eventually he was among the first Americans to appreciate the French impressionistic aesthetic. Cook sought a national definition of art, which he initially saw as rooted in narrative subjects and later understood to be the projection of individual character coupled with American experience.⁶⁶ He devoted less attention to sculpture than to paintings and architecture,⁶⁷ stressing the necessity of realism over idealism. He found much to admire in the naturalistic work of Ward, whereas he disparaged the over-attention to detail in the work of the second generation of expatriate neoclassicists, and especially demeaned the so-called “white mamorean flock” of women sculptors.⁶⁸

Cook’s early awareness of Saint-Gaudens as an artist appears to have grown out of the sculptor’s involvement with the decoration of Boston’s Trinity Church in 1876-77 under the direction of La Farge. At this time, Cook was revising his opinion about La Farge, whose poetic style he railed against in the 1860s, but came to appreciate during the 1870s. Having returned to the *Daily Tribune* staff in 1875, Cook wrote its editor Whitelaw Reid in November 1876 for permission to travel to Boston to write letters for the paper on the new Museum of Fine Arts building and the decoration of Trinity Church. Cook cited the significance of the Trinity undertaking as “the first time . . . artists as such have taken such a work in hand” and named the principal players, including La Farge, Francis Lathrop, Frank Millet, George Maynard, and “now Mr. St. Gaudens.”⁶⁹

During the 1870s Cook maintained proximity to the Gilder circle. Helena and Richard Gilder were friendly with the Cooks on a social level, but always held Cook at

bay. Their guardedness with Cook is evident in a remark recorded in the Gilders' journal in 1874: "Clarence Cook is like an old maid, in not too disagreeable a sense. He is not a critic . . . but a criticiser [sic], he lacks study + breadth but hates as heartily as if he had them—He has his generousities."⁷⁰ But Cook served his purposes for the Gilders. After engaging in a spirited defense of Saint-Gaudens following the rejection of his plaster sketch from the National Academy of Design in spring 1877, Cook, along with Charles de Kay, was present at the founding of the Society of American Artists at the Gilders' "Studio" in 1877. He promoted the new organization in the pages of the *Daily Tribune*. During this time, Cook was also contracted to write articles for Gilder's *Scribner's Monthly*, including in 1878, "Recent Church Decoration," in which he focused on Trinity Church in Boston and Saint Thomas Church in New York, another La Farge-Saint-Gaudens collaboration.⁷¹ In this article Cook saluted the promise of young Saint-Gaudens's artistic talent.

Cook's disillusion with the Gilders, the Society of American Artists, and eventually Saint-Gaudens, began to show as early as 1878 when the popular sentimental animal painter John Dolph was elected to the Society. Gilder recalled Cook's disenchantment in 1902:

I remember that Cook soon hauled off because a certain artist was admitted. He said it was already spoiled. I labored with him and told him that when a cause took up physical arms by means of an association, in order to gain the advantages of an association it was apt to come down somewhat from the highest ideals; that even among the apostles there was one not up to the mark, and the Church itself was not the ideal thing that the ideal of Christianity is.⁷²

Cook was temporarily placated, but by the early 1880s had fully soured on the Gilder circle.⁷³

After Cook's break from the Gilders, he no longer used Saint-Gaudens as a pulpit of sorts for his principles. Especially in the years of his association with *The Studio*, Cook was both forthright and unpredictable in his response to Saint-Gaudens's output, as will be demonstrated in the following chapters. Every instance of positive response was matched by another of unimpressed negative commentary, some of which fed into Cook's larger self-serving agendas. Although he did not mention Saint-Gaudens by name, in 1883 Cook was particularly critical of the sculptor's multi-media work for the dining room ceiling of the Cornelius Vanderbilt II mansion (fig. 40). Cook, the author of *The House Beautiful* (1878), saw it not as an Aesthetic movement reflection of bringing taste and beauty into the domestic setting, but as a manifestation of vulgar bourgeois materialism: "Marble and onyx, bronze and ivory, and mother-of-pearl have been employed in carrying out the designer's scheme. But this is the art of the barbarian—true art is smothered to death under this parade." Cook continued in defense of a far more tasteful "Quaker" approach to decorating: "Just now we are overdoing almost everything . . . one really good picture on the wall would be a relief to-day in the midst of this riot of upholstery."⁷⁴ Likewise, when Cook assessed the Architectural League of New York's exhibition of 1891-92, he blasted artistic response to "the curious fad for art of the *cinque cento*." To Cook, Saint-Gaudens's portrait of Bessie Smith White (fig. 55) suffered in its imitation of its Italian Renaissance predecessors, not a compliment to an artist who was by then widely acknowledged for inspiring and redefining the direction of American relief sculpture. Even the accompanying frame of Stanford White's design drew Cook's ire for aping the past: "The suggestion of early Italian design has been carried as far as

possible, and even the worn surface, and the faded, washed-out gold of the model have been laboriously reproduced.”⁷⁵

Because Saint-Gaudens’s relationship with Cook remained on a largely professional level (unlike that of Gilder), one is able to glean little of the sculptor’s own perceptions about Cook and his writing. The sculptor’s most revealing pronouncement appears in a March 1878 letter to White, where he offered two truths about Cook’s seminal position in the history of American art criticism: “He isn’t afraid to say what he thinks . . . far superior to all the others we have had to write on Art in ‘Ameriky.’”⁷⁶ He undoubtedly revised his personal, if not professional, opinion of Cook in subsequent years.

Charles de Kay

Although Charles de Kay has been less examined than other major late-nineteenth-century critics,⁷⁷ he is significant to an understanding of Saint-Gaudens’s development because, as the content of his writings reflects, he was a great proponent of sculpture. The younger brother of Helena de Kay Gilder, and thus the brother-in-law of Gilder, he traveled in the same genteel social circles and shared the same cultural reformist agenda. De Kay enjoyed a multilingual cosmopolitan upbringing and graduated from Yale in 1868. Following a brief stint in the business world, he served as principal art critic for the *New York Times* between 1876 and 1894. During these years he also wrote editorials and published on literary matters. Like Gilder, de Kay’s value to a new generation of American artists must be measured not only through his published words but also in his

actions. He was an organizer of the National Sculpture Society in 1893, serving as its first treasurer, and later founded the National Arts Club in 1898. De Kay left his post at the *Times* in 1894 and relocated to Berlin for three years as consul general. Upon his return in 1897, he wrote sporadically for the *Times*; he also served as editor for the *Post* in 1907 and the *Art World* from 1915 to 1917. As de Kay aged and aesthetic styles modernized, his writings took an increasingly conservative turn.

De Kay was a remarkably versatile critic, author, and poet. Indeed, the range of his publications on the arts and literature is vast. His approach to art writing had a more democratic ring than that of some of his contemporary critics; he aimed his words at the middle class rather than solely the educated elite.⁷⁸ Although not an aesthete *per se*, he was a particularly effective voice for the new movement artists and the new school of American sculpture, championing stylistic over thematic concerns. He aligned himself with the younger painters working in expressive, coloristic modes, and advocated particularly strenuously for Ryder. In addition to Saint-Gaudens, beginning in the late 1870s, he also promoted Warner, but seems to not have been a particular intimate of either sculptor.⁷⁹ Saint-Gaudens's most direct interactions occurred with de Kay in 1877 in connection with the founding of the Society of American Artists. As described in Chapter 2, de Kay, like Cook, used his powerful position at the *Times* to act as a press agent for the fledgling organization.⁸⁰ As Wyatt Eaton, a founding member of the Society, put it to the Gilders: "de Kay is [and] will continue to be an important aid to our cause."⁸¹ Later, in 1889, de Kay and Saint-Gaudens were involved in the organization of the large exhibition of the works of Antoine-Louis Bayre, de Kay authoring the accompanying catalogue.⁸² That same year, de Kay, an ardent numismatist, wrote a

lengthy article on Saint-Gaudens's *George Washington Centennial Inaugural Medal* for *Harper's Weekly*, painstakingly describing the object and observing: "It is safe to say that no medal in honor of WASHINGTON surpasses . . . this one in dignity, sobriety, and beauty." In the process, de Kay revealed one of his guiding principles, that art and literature served larger purposes as vehicles of American nationalism, as he put it, "the highest expression of the nation."⁸³

Mariana Griswold Van Rensselaer

Mariana Griswold Van Rensselaer's personal association with Saint-Gaudens probably began in the early 1880s, after the sculptor returned from Paris and she published her article on the *Farragut Monument* in *American Architect and Building News* in 1881.⁸⁴ The friendship no doubt grew more sustained after the death of Van Rensselaer's husband in 1884, which occasioned her relocation from New Brunswick, New Jersey, to New York. Like the de Kays, Van Rensselaer was from an old New York family, and spent formative years (1868-73) in Germany, gaining an appreciation for European art and literature.⁸⁵ In 1873 she wed Schuyler Van Rensselaer, a scion of the foremost Hudson River patroon family. Her literary career began in 1876 with the publication of poems in *Harper's*. Van Rensselaer spent most of 1877 in Europe and upon her return began art criticism in her characteristically elegant prose for several publications, among them *Lippincott's Monthly Magazine* and the *American Art Review*. In the early years of her career, her primary critical identity lay with the *American Architect and Building News*, for which she authored exhibition reviews and other articles on the fine arts from

1876 to 1887. Later she wrote for the *Independent* from 1886 to 1889 and the *World* in 1882-83 and again from 1892 to 1898. The content of Van Rensselaer's prose was frequently synthetic, rather than original, but it was always solid and carefully-composed. The scope and extent of her publications is impressive. In 1888 she issued the first monograph on an American architect, *Henry Hobson Richardson and His Works*. She also wrote prolifically on gardening and landscape design for *Garden and Forest*, yet her best-known work is probably the monumental two-volume *History of the City of New York in the Seventeenth Century* (1909).

Van Rensselaer was on close terms with the Gilders for many years.⁸⁶ She first published with *Scribner's Monthly* in March 1880, and frequently contributed to *Century Magazine* from 1882 on, notably a series of articles on recent American architecture from 1884 to 1886 and on English cathedrals from 1887 to 1892.⁸⁷ Saint-Gaudens's own friendship with Van Rensselaer was grounded in their mutual aesthetic credo, tangibly manifested in the inscription on her bas-relief portrait (fig. 60) by Saint-Gaudens: "The spirit, not the work." Homer Saint-Gaudens observed that his father "took a great fancy to Mrs. Schuyler Van Rensselaer (perhaps that is why he once sketched wings upon Mrs. Van Rensselaer's relief). . . ."⁸⁸ Their shared desire for national expression in art also fed their relationship. In her published and private writings Saint-Gaudens was her sculptor exemplar. For instance, when she wrote to compliment him on the *Robert Gould Shaw Memorial* (1884-97; Boston Common), she saw in it "a success which will mean, not merely giving aesthetic pleasure but also . . . an inspiration to patriotism and noble living."⁸⁹

Although Van Rensselaer once modestly professed herself “no judge of sculpture and . . . not well enough acquainted with modern products,”⁹⁰ she was attentive to the discipline and frequently commented on it in her reviews. From the 1881 publication of her *Farragut* article onward, her greatest loyalty was reserved for Saint-Gaudens. She used an illustration of the central figure from his ill-fated tomb for Edwin D. Morgan (fig. 2) on the title page for her *Book of American Figure Painters*, published by J. B. Lippincott in 1886.⁹¹ The idealized figure of the angel must have particularly appealed to Van Rensselaer for its quattrocento inflections, since she recommended that artists draw on Italian Renaissance models for their work. In 1887 she wrote a sympathetic review of Saint-Gaudens’s *Lincoln* for *Century Magazine* in conjunction with Kenyon Cox’s monographic survey of the sculptor’s oeuvre.⁹² Her assessments of Saint-Gaudens’s exhibited works in her writings for the *American Architect and Building News*, the *World*, and the *Independent* were thoughtfully considered and predictably, if not concertedly, positive. Even as her interests shifted in the late 1880s to architecture and landscape design, she continued to write about Saint-Gaudens specifically and American sculpture in general.⁹³

Kenyon Cox

Saint-Gaudens’s relationship with Kenyon Cox differed from those with other art writers, because Cox too was a practicing artist, particularly celebrated as easel and mural painter of academic figural subjects. Saint-Gaudens and Cox shared a friendship from the late 1870s, and early on Cox depended on the sculptor as much for professional and social

advancement as Saint-Gaudens benefited from Cox's published writings. Cox's path as a developing artist was similar to many Americans during the late nineteenth century.⁹⁴ Born into a distinguished Ohio family, he enrolled first at the McMicken School of Design in Cincinnati and then at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts. He went to Paris in 1877, the same year Saint-Gaudens returned there to work on his *Farragut*, and remained until 1882. Cox studied in the independent atelier of Carolus-Duran, then in the atelier of Alexandre Cabanel, and at the Académie Julian. In 1879 he earned admission to the École des Beaux-Arts, working with Jean-Léon Gérôme.

In autumn 1883 Cox settled in New York. He began teaching life drawing classes at the Art Students League in 1884 and was affiliated with that organization until 1909 (Saint-Gaudens joined its faculty in 1888). To earn a living, Cox began illustrating articles for magazines, including *Harper's* and *Century*. By the mid-1880s Cox devoted an increasing proportion of his time to art writing, often for these same journals. He wrote forthright criticism for the *Nation* and for a brief time in 1885, the *Evening Post*. He later published several anthologies of his writings, among them *Old Masters and New: Essays in Art Criticism* (1905); *Painters and Sculptors: A Second Series of Old Masters and New* (1907); and *Artist and Public and Other Essays on Art Subjects* (1914).

Saint-Gaudens and Cox became well acquainted in Paris, but their relationship became more sustained after Cox moved to New York in 1883. A component of their friendship was based on a mutual desire to forward each other's careers through various tools of publicity, Saint-Gaudens largely through networking with personal contacts and Cox through his illustrations and published writings. For instance, Saint-Gaudens used his friendship with Gilder on Cox's behalf. The sculptor was likely instrumental in

arranging for the publication of Cox's 1884 article on Italian Renaissance sculptors in the *Century Magazine*. Cox wrote: "The question of whether the *Century* will do an article and illustrations by me on the Renaissance sculptors is pending. I have submitted the manuscript and hope to hear from it soon. St. Gaudens is interesting himself in it, and as he is our best sculptor and a friend of the editor of the *Century*, his word will have weight, I trust."⁹⁵ In addition to whispering in Gilder's ear, Saint-Gaudens also assisted Cox by landing him illustration assignments, including those of the sculptor's own work. One of Cox's first published illustrations was his drawing of the *Robert Richard Randall Memorial*, published as the frontispiece to the June 1884 issue of the *Century* (fig. 46). Cox's comments to his mother about this drawing—written only weeks after he arrived in New York—suggests that he well understood the role that Saint-Gaudens could play in promoting his career: "I just finished the other day a drawing for the *Century* of St. Gaudens's statue of the founder of Sailors' Snug Harbor, for which I got \$45.00. St. Gaudens himself proposed that I should do the work. I am getting into the best artistic crowd here, St. Gaudens, Dewing, and other of the best men we have. . . ."⁹⁶

This "crowd" of artists was that inner circle of cosmopolites affiliated with the Society of American Artists, to which Cox had been elected in November 1882 while still in Paris. Later they comprised the core of men who frequented Saint-Gaudens's Thirty-sixth Street studio for regular concerts on Sunday afternoons. Cox later recalled this gathering of New York's young cultural elite: "That long white studio became a familiar meeting-place for all who were interested in any form of art."⁹⁷ His friendships with Saint-Gaudens and Dewing occasioned his purchase of property in Cornish, New Hampshire, in 1896, and he and his artist-wife became an integral part of the Cornish

colony's social fabric. When Saint-Gaudens was celebrated at the "Masque of 'Ours,' the Gods and the Golden Bowl," in June 1905, Cox, who played the role of Pluto, wrote a charming description of the open-air event for the *Nation*.⁹⁸

Cox was always a traditionalist and an idealist in viewpoint. Through his professional involvements, institutional committee work, and his art, he labored tirelessly for the progress of American art. 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. Therefore, Saint-Gaudens's like-minded work proved easy for him to admire. As Cox's biographer H. Wayne Morgan has aptly stated of the sculptor: "He became an ideal as well as a friend for Cox, who saw him as a harbinger of the second Renaissance he so often discussed."⁹⁹ For instance, when Cox's "Sculptors of the Early Italian Renaissance" was published in the *Century*, he was quick to align Saint-Gaudens to this lineage:

From the time when Paul Dubois turned to them for inspiration, and produced his little "Saint John Baptist" and his "Florentine Singer," a new and glorious epoch of French sculpture began, and Falguière and Mercié, and the rest of that brilliant school, with such men as our own St. Gaudens, owe much of what is purest and best in their works to the study and the example of these old Italians.¹⁰⁰

Cox's most significant article on Saint-Gaudens (discussed in Chapter 5) was published in the *Century Magazine* in November 1887 following three years of text and illustration preparation.¹⁰¹ Always positive in his outlook on Saint-Gaudens, he wrote on the *William Tecumseh Sherman Monument* (1892-1903; Grand Army Plaza, New York) for the *Nation* following its unveiling in 1903 and issued several published encomiums following the sculptor's death.¹⁰² While Saint-Gaudens appreciated Cox's published praise, it came too late for the reputation-enhancing of the late 1870s and early 1880s and

thus was less important for constructing Saint-Gaudens's reputation than for polishing it. And polish and promote it Cox loyally did. In assessing Cox's *Old Masters and New* in 1905, de Kay suggested that only Saint-Gaudens lived up to Cox's prescribed ideals for the American artist: "Augustus Saint Gaudens is the only all-round American whose work he reviews, for John Singer Sargent and Whistler are to all intents and purposes foreigners. He may be congratulated on the wisdom of silence regarding all other American artists."¹⁰³ When Cox published *Artist and Public* in 1914, the three artists who earned separate chapters were Jean-François Millet, Raphael, and Saint-Gaudens. And in the middle of a chapter on Auguste Rodin for *Painters and Sculptors* in 1907, Cox could not resist departing on a career-long survey of several pages on "another Augustus" to establish that the two Augusti were antipodal in their approaches to sculpture, Rodin inherently a modeler and Saint-Gaudens naturally a designer.¹⁰⁴

Like many artists of the day, Saint-Gaudens and Cox exchanged friendship portraits. Cox's ambitious representation of Saint-Gaudens in his Thirty-sixth Street studio (1887; fig. 3) served as a showpiece for his aesthetic ideals, and publicly proclaimed his close allegiance with a major artistic personality. Saint-Gaudens is 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 (fig. 37), a solar print of his *Amor* from the Vanderbilt mantelpiece (fig. 39), and a copy of the *Femme Inconnue* from third quarter of the fifteenth century (Musée du Louvre, Paris), a Renaissance sculpture that Cox venerated.¹⁰⁵ Cox also painted a simple bust-length rendering of the sculptor in 1888 (National Academy of Design, New York),

which served as the sculptor's diploma gift to the Academy when he became an associate academician.¹⁰⁶ Saint-Gaudens returned Cox's favors the following year with one of his charming profile portraits in bas-relief (fig. 4), inscribing it in his characteristic lettering style: KENYON•COX•PAINTER•IN•HIS / THIRTY THIRD YEAR•BY HIS FRIEND•/ AVGVSTVS •SAINT-GAVDENS•M•D•C•C•CMXXXIX.¹⁰⁷ In July 1903, following Cox's publication on the *Sherman* for the *Nation*, Saint-Gaudens wrote to say that he planned to reduce his portrait medallion of Cox to medal scale "to show my appreciation of what you have said of my work. . . . It will be a mark of friendship and my admiration for you, old boy. . . ." ¹⁰⁸

Saint-Gaudens and Other Writers

Although the extended Gilder circle was most instrumental in shaping Saint-Gaudens's professional reputation, the sculptor was on good terms with a number of other writers. None of these individuals, however, wrote on his behalf with the fervor or consistency of Gilder, Van Rensselaer, or Cox. Saint-Gaudens's relationships were almost always as much personal as professional, underscoring a pervasive cronyism between artists and the press (in fact, a number of practicing artists were also members of the press). In addition to sculpted portraits of Gilder (fig. 33), Van Rensselaer, and Cox, writers were the subjects of Saint-Gaudens's bas-reliefs—William Ralston Balch of the *Philadelphia Press* sat for the sculptor in Paris in 1878 (fig. 5), while William Dean Howells and his daughter Mildred posed for him in New York in 1897 (fig. 6).¹⁰⁹ Howells and Saint-Gaudens are thought to have met in 1890,¹¹⁰ but may have become acquainted earlier as both were intimates of the Gilder salon and Henry Adams for whom Saint-Gaudens

completed the *Adams Memorial* (1886-91; Rock Creek Cemetery, Washington, D.C.). Nevertheless, the friendship must have intensified after Howells moved to New York in 1891. Saint-Gaudens executed the seated double portrait as a sort of recompense for the author's praise of the *William Tecumseh Sherman* bust (fig. 56). In one of Saint-Gaudens's rare acknowledgements of the importance of criticism of his work, he noted of Howells in the *Reminiscences*: "So in appreciation of that, as well as the deep admiration which I have for his achievement, his principles, and his delightful personality, I begged that he allow me to make his portrait and that of his daughter, Miss Mildred Howells."¹¹¹

In addition, Saint-Gaudens modeled posthumous portraits of Josiah Gilbert Holland, editor of *Scribner's Monthly* (fig. 7), and Charles A. Dana, editor of the *New York Sun* (fig. 8).¹¹² The sculptor carried out these commissions, executed from photographs, in concert with Gilder and William Mackay Laffan respectively. As mentioned earlier, Gilder was Holland's assistant, then successor, at *Scribner's Monthly*. Furthermore, Holland's wife was a member of the Chapin family, with whom Saint-Gaudens became acquainted in Paris and from whom he later received the commission for *The Puritan (Deacon Samuel Chapin)* (fig. 50) for Springfield, Massachusetts. Laffan ordered two bronze replicas of Dana's portrait, one for the *Sun* and the other for the Dana family (both are now unlocated).¹¹³

Saint-Gaudens was friendly with Laffan, who like the sculptor, was born in Dublin in 1848.¹¹⁴ After pursuing medical studies in Dublin, Laffan changed his professional course and wrote for newspapers in San Francisco and Baltimore. Between 1877 and 1881, he covered drama and art topics for the *Sun*. After a stint as art editor and a London agent for Harper Brothers, he returned to the *Sun* in 1884, succeeding Dana as

its publisher. In 1902 he became its owner. A man of myriad interests, Laffan was also a ceramics collector and advised J. Pierpont Morgan on the formation of his collection. He later served as a trustee of the Metropolitan Museum of Art while Morgan was president of the museum. Saint-Gaudens and Laffan's friendship dated at least from the early 1880s when both were members of the Tile Club and traveled in the same social circles. Laffan, a founding member (1877) of this informal social and artistic club, wrote illustrated articles on its history for *Scribner's Monthly*, *Harper's Weekly*, and *Century Magazine* between 1879 and 1882.¹¹⁵ Also an artist specializing in black-and-white illustrations, Laffan's qualifications were both literary and artistic.

Saint-Gaudens's relationship with author and editor George Parsons Lathrop was cultivated through his wife Augusta. Her closest childhood friend was Rose Hawthorne Lathrop, daughter of Nathaniel Hawthorne and wife of Lathrop.¹¹⁶ George Lathrop was also the younger brother of Francis Lathrop, with whom Saint-Gaudens had worked on the murals for Trinity Church in Boston in 1876-77. Between 1875 and 1877 George Lathrop was on the staff of the Boston-based *Atlantic Monthly* as an associate editor, sharing art writing duties with Howells, who was editor.¹¹⁷ In addition to editing the landmark *Complete Works of Nathaniel Hawthorne* (1883), Lathrop steadily published his own novels and poems and was a fixture in old New York and New England society. The Lathrops lived in New York from 1882 to 1885 before moving to New London, Connecticut. Saint-Gaudens remained friendly with Lathrop, who was often insolvent and in ill health, presumably until the sculptor's removal to Paris in 1897 and the litterateur's death in 1898. In his *Reminiscences*, Saint-Gaudens wrote of a convivial visit by Lathrop to his Fifty-ninth Street studio where the *Sherman Monument* was being modeled.¹¹⁸

William Anderson Coffin was art critic for the *Evening Post* and the *Nation* between 1886 and 1891, and then from 1896 to 1900 he wrote for Laffan's *Sun*. He was also an accomplished artist, having trained in the Parisian atelier of Léon Bonnat from 1878 to 1881.¹¹⁹ In tandem with his writing career, Coffin continued to paint, specializing in landscapes and figural work that he exhibited at the National Academy of Design and the Society of American Artists. Saint-Gaudens and Coffin first met in the early 1880s at the chamber music concerts held weekly in the sculptor's studio. Their friendship deepened by the late 1880s, and the two men enjoyed long conversations about art and literature.¹²⁰ Together they served on the jury of artists who selected American art for the 1889 Exposition Universelle in Paris. Coffin was the author of a lengthy article on Saint-Gaudens, published in the *Century Magazine* at the time of the unveiling of the *Shaw Memorial* in 1897.¹²¹ His writings were in sympathy with those of the Gilder circle, embodying the new movement principle that American subjects executed with solid European technique produced a national art. He too appreciated the expression of distinctive individual style, which he found embodied in Saint-Gaudens as a "designer."¹²² Coffin's admiration for Saint-Gaudens also had tangible results. In 1889, as manager of the Committee on Art and Exhibition for the Washington Centennial Committee (on which Gilder also sat), he coordinated production efforts for Saint-Gaudens's *George Washington Inaugural Centennial Medal*. Later, when Coffin was director of fine arts at the Buffalo Pan-American Exposition in 1901, he spearheaded efforts to award Saint-Gaudens a special gold medal that was modeled by the sculptor's assistant James Earle Fraser (Saint-Gaudens National Historic Site).¹²³

Writers of all stripes were constantly circulating through Saint-Gaudens's orbit, in large measure due to their affiliation with Gilder and the *Century Magazine*. Most of these individuals thus figured prominently amongst New York's established social elite, if not in national or international circles. Gilder's sister Jeannette and brother Joseph were editors of the *Critic*, a successful biweekly (then weekly) journal of cultural criticism, which they founded in 1881.¹²⁴ Prior to that appointment, Jeannette Gilder served as literary editor for the *New York Herald*, where she wrote on music, drama, and literature. The Gilders' *Critic*, which took a pro-nationalist stance in its writings and reviews, was consistently an organ of positive publicity for Saint-Gaudens's work. Henry James lived in New York for six months during 1875, writing primarily for the *Nation*, and then moved to Paris where Saint-Gaudens also lived from 1877 to 1880. Additionally, James and his brother William were friendly with La Farge, who mentored and collaborated with Saint-Gaudens during the mid-1870s and the early 1880s. Walt Whitman and Samuel Clemens—both of whom were published in the *Century*—were also acquaintances through the Gilders. Clemens even stood in as a witness with Saint-Gaudens at Frank Millet's wedding in Paris in 1879. And through Will Low, in 1887 Saint-Gaudens struck up a friendship with Robert Louis Stevenson that was cultivated over some months as the sculptor modeled the Scottish author's portrait (fig. 58).

Saint-Gaudens and Olin Levi Warner: Critical Contrasts

Saint-Gaudens was not the only new movement sculptor who enjoyed close relations with New York-based writers. Olin Levi Warner, the other sculptural bright light of the 1870s

and early 1880s, also enjoyed the friendship and longstanding admiration of several of these individuals. Both Saint-Gaudens and Warner earned the critical and personal loyalties of their writers by the late 1870s, several years before either of their careers reached the point of financial security. It is imperative to mention that critics seem to have developed and maintained stronger allegiances to one sculptor or the other. Only the more pluralistic de Kay meted out praise for both men in equal measure when his writings and actions are assessed in retrospect. Whereas Gilder and Van Rensselaer advocated more vocally for Saint-Gaudens, Cook and William C. Brownell were especially partial to Warner. As George Gurney has observed, Cook was the first journalist to show sustained appreciation of Warner's work.¹²⁵ Following the Academy annual of 1878 in which he wrote positively of the sculptor's submissions, Cook commissioned a portrait of his wife (private collection) from Warner.¹²⁶

Warner's other acolyte, Brownell, was a native New Yorker of comfortable breeding who graduated from Amherst College in 1871. He served as city editor for the *World* from 1872 until 1879, and wrote for the *Nation* from 1879 to 1881. After 1888 he was editor and literary advisor for Charles Scribner's Sons, a position he held for nearly four decades.¹²⁷ Although primarily a literary critic, Brownell was a particularly effective voice for new movement artists affiliated with the Society of American Artists. He championed their preference for subjective expression over thematic concerns in an important three-part article, "The Younger Painters of America," published in *Scribner's Monthly* in 1880 and 1881.¹²⁸ Brownell was friendly with a number of artists, including La Farge, and especially with the younger residents of the Tenth Street Studio Building. He became familiar with Warner and his work after visiting Daniel Cottier's gallery in

the late 1870s.¹²⁹ Brownell and Warner struck up a lasting friendship, as attested to by Warner's bust of Brownell of 1886 (fig. 47), modeled at the sculptor's request and inscribed: "To my friend / W^m C. Brownell."¹³⁰ Shortly after Warner's death in 1896, Brownell published, among other encomiums, a perceptive and sympathetic monographic article on the sculptor in *Scribner's Magazine*.¹³¹

Although Saint-Gaudens's reputation ultimately eclipsed Warner's, Warner, as it will be seen, was also a darling of the critics in sympathy with new movement artists. In much of the writing of the late 1870s and early 1880s, his portrait busts and medallions were given equal, and sometimes greater, attention than Saint-Gaudens's analogous work. And it was Warner with whom Saint-Gaudens was most frequently compared and contrasted through the late 1880s. Because the majority of his oeuvre is composed of these smaller sculptures, Warner never earned the wide acclaim that Saint-Gaudens did when critics shifted their emphasis from Saint-Gaudens's bas-reliefs to his well-known monuments.¹³² Still, Warner was the subject of a monographic article before Saint-Gaudens: Ripley Hitchcock published on him in the *Art Review* in 1886, a year earlier than Cox's appreciation of Saint-Gaudens appeared in *Century Magazine*. Admittedly, Cox's article must have enjoyed far wider national circulation than Hitchcock's in the short-lived (1886-88) and specialized *Art Review*.¹³³

Saint-Gaudens and Warner were two very different personalities and thus their tactics varied as they developed their professional reputations. Both men faced discouraging beginnings in New York in the early and mid-1870s on their return from study in Europe. In addition to undertaking decorative work, Saint-Gaudens and Warner each slowly earned portrait commissions that engendered professional success. During

these years, the two men each developed professional spheres that overlapped, but remained distinct. Whereas Saint-Gaudens's lucky break came through his friendship with Gilder and La Farge and by earning the *Farragut* commission in 1877, Warner's turning point was his affiliation with Daniel Cottier, a Scottish-born dealer and designer of decorative objects. Warner may have first come into contact with Cottier in 1877, perhaps through the activities of the nascent Society of American Artists. The Fifth Avenue gallery of Cottier and Company reflected its owner's Aesthetic Movement and Barbizon taste and became the site of Warner's studio space until 1879 as well as a showroom for his sculptures.¹³⁴ Not only did Cottier commission his own portrait from Warner (fig. 20), which earned praise at the 1878 annual of the National Academy of Design, but Cottier also connected the sculptor with other potential sitters and patrons.¹³⁵

Criticism and Cronyism

The alliance of certain critics with specific artists was hardly a late-nineteenth-century development, but to the new movement circle, this overt boosterism took on an added imperative. This phenomenon of critical propagandizing warrants further examination because it so blatantly colors responses to Saint-Gaudens's work. If propaganda serves motive, in this case, the promotion of the nationalistic concept of an American school with Saint-Gaudens as its exemplar, then Gilder, Van Rensselaer, and Cox stand particularly guilty as charged. Propaganda took on two forms for the critics in relation to the sculptor. First, they plugged or "puffed" him in well-timed and carefully crafted articles, usually in Gilder-controlled publications and often in conjunction with

monument unveilings. Notably Gilder presented his important and attractively illustrated assessment of Saint-Gaudens soon after the *Farragut* was dedicated in 1881, while in 1887 Cox and Van Rensselaer's articles on Saint-Gaudens appeared in the *Century*, following the unveiling of the *Standing Lincoln*.¹³⁶ In each case, Saint-Gaudens had a hand in the final content of the article. In 1890 Cox alluded to this insider favoritism to Gilder when Gilder proposed that William A. Coffin write an article on Cox for the *Century*: "I don't know whether our personal intimacy [Cox and Coffin's] would make it seem cliquish—I don't know that there is any stronger objection to that than my writing on St. Gaudens or Chase."¹³⁷ Second, these writers responded in a unilaterally positive fashion to Saint-Gaudens's exhibited work, an effect that snowballed with other less independent-minded members of the press who dutifully followed their example. Oftentimes their idealistic commentary, couched in superlatives, included hyperbole that even the most ardent admirer of Saint-Gaudens would admit borders on the excessive. For instance, when Van Rensselaer assessed the recently unveiled *Henry W. Bellows Memorial* (fig. 54) in 1887, she lavished praise: "In this monument . . . we have, I think, the finest ecclesiastic work that one of our sculptors has yet produced, and a work which may, without fear, stand comparison with the best in any other land or of any age."¹³⁸

The fact that a certain group of progressive writers were under the influence of Saint-Gaudens and his work did not go unnoticed by other critics. In the early 1890s, Alfred Trumble, the highly-opinionated editor of the *Collector*, launched a vitriolic campaign against the original eighteen-foot version of the sculptor's *Diana* (1886-91; destroyed), installed atop the tower of White's Madison Square Garden in 1891.

Although much of his opposition concerned the figure's nudity, he also expressed frustration with his fellow critics:

I was, I believe the first journalist to call public attention to the ridiculous ugliness of the pretentious figure of Diana, modeled by Mr. Augustus St. Gaudens, as a weathercock for the tower of Madison Square Garden in this city. Everybody who considered themselves anybody as art critics had been blowing the praises of this work, like explosions of natural gases. But the fact remained that the figure was out of all proportion to its situation, and was clumsy and bad even as an abstract piece of statuary.¹³⁹

As Trumble recognized, the prevailing response to Saint-Gaudens's work may be characterized as remarkably positive. The appropriateness of his stylistic approaches and thematic content did not engender critical controversy or mercurial ambivalence to the extent that the paintings of Thomas Eakins, Winslow Homer, or J. Frank Currier's did. Still, the sculptor was from time to time the object of negative commentary along the lines of Trumble's. Among identifiable writers, Cook and de Kay freely dispensed critiques when warranted.¹⁴⁰ As demonstrated, Cook frequently allowed personal feelings and agendas to influence the tone of his criticism. On the other hand, de Kay was a more impartial writer who did not allow his friendships with new movement artists to obscure his response to their individual productions.

The duty of the critic to maintain impartiality and uphold standards were recurrent themes in contemporary analyses of art criticism.¹⁴¹ Critics frequently pointed fingers over professional qualifications, urging each other to remain principled, restrained, unprejudiced, and always informed. Knowledge and context were particularly necessary in order to fairly judge artistic productions. Among the reasons for such self-regulating behavior was the need to separate the proverbial wheat from the chaff, to distinguish extraordinary creations from the merely ordinary ones. Most critics at least outwardly felt

this objective was best achieved through privileging the exceptional rather than fault-finding. Another motive was to regulate and guide increasingly sophisticated public taste in aesthetic matters. An article presumably written, or at the very least approved by Gilder, that was published in *Scribner's Monthly* in 1879, observed that the public:

learned that these writers have no guiding principles, that they agree in nothing, and that each man writes from the stand-point of his own private tastes, or his own private prejudices and partisanship. . . . We the people don't care for your private tastes and notions. . . . What we want of you is instruction in sound principles of art, which will enable us to form judgments and to understand the basis of yours. Your prejudices, and piques, and whims are not of the slightest value to anybody. . . .¹⁴²

Such appeals for response unbiased by personal feelings, however, stand in stark contrast to the evidence. Those who were calling for equitable standards of treatment—as it shall be demonstrated—were also those engaging in promotional rhetoric and advancing the opinions and productions of their artist-friends.

Notes to Chapter 1

¹ Margaret C. Conrads, "Winslow Homer and His Critics in the 1870s" (Ph.D. diss., City University of New York, 1999), 16-18. Conrads devotes extended discussion to the identities of the various periodicals while addressing the sea changes that occurred in the world of New York journalism in the post-Civil War era. She notes the founding of the following specialized art journals: *Aldine*, *American Architect and Building News*, *American Art Review*, *Art Amateur*, *Art Interchange*, and the New York edition of the *Art Journal*.

² David B. Dearing, ed., *Rave Reviews: American Art and Its Critics, 1826-1925*, exh. cat. (New York: National Academy of Design, 2000), 53.

³ *Ibid.*, 210.

⁴ [Clarence Cook], "Fine Arts: National Academy of Design. Forty-ninth Annual Exhibition [Seventh Article]," *New York Daily Tribune*, 2 May 1874, 3.

⁵ Dearing, ed., *Rave Reviews*, 212 n. 1: "Greenough's work appeared in only six of the Academy's exhibitions, Crawford's in four, and Powers's in three."

⁶ Brown showed his work at the Academy eight times between 1847 and 1868 while Ward participated five times between 1862 and 1874.

⁷ "National Academy of Design: West Room--Sculpture Room," *New York Times*, 27 June 1865, 5.

⁸ "Fine Arts: The Academy Exhibition. Second Notice," *New York Times*, 19 April 1874, 4. The three cited portraits were Charles Calverley's *Reverend John Maclean* (1874; Princeton University, Princeton, N.J.); Launt Thompson's *Thomas Plunkett* (1874; Berkshire Athenaeum, Pittsfield, Mass.); and John Quincy Adams Ward's *James T. Brady* (before 1874; unlocated). See *Catalogue of the Forty-ninth Annual Exhibition of the National Academy of Design* (New York: E. Wells Sackett, 1874), 27, nos. 406-8.

⁹ For further discussion of these shows, see Thayer Tolles, "Modeling a Reputation: The American Sculptor and New York City," in Catherine Hoover Voorsanger and John K. Howat, eds., *Art and the Empire City: New York, 1825-1861*, exh. cat. (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2000), 158-167.

¹⁰ Pickering Dodge, *Sculpture and Plastic Art* (Boston: John P. Jewett, 1850).

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 331.

¹² *Ibid.*, 336.

¹³ Hannah Farnham Sawyer Lee, *Familiar Sketches of Sculpture and Sculptors*, 2 vols. (Boston: Crosby, Nichols, 1854).

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 228.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 230.

¹⁶ James Jackson Jarves, *The Art-Idea: Sculpture, Painting, and Architecture in America*, ed. Benjamin Rowland, Jr. (1864; reprint, Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1960), 226.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸ Linda Jones Docherty, "A Search for Identity: American Art Criticism and the Concept of the 'Native School,' 1876-1893" (Ph.D. diss., University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 1985), 199.

¹⁹ Henry T. Tuckerman, *Book of the Artists: American Artist Life* (1867; reprint, New York: James F. Carr, 1967).

²⁰ Louis Viardot, *Wonders of Sculpture*, trans. Clarence Cook (New York: Scribner, Armstrong, and Company, 1873).

²¹ *Ibid.*, 375.

²² On *The Crayon*, see Janice Simon, "The Crayon 1855-1861: The Voice of Nature in Criticism, Poetry, and the Fine Arts" (Ph.D. diss., University of Michigan, 1990).

²³ Erastus D. Palmer, "Philosophy of the Ideal," *Crayon* 3, pt. 1 (January 1856): 18-20.

²⁴ "The Vagabond. Painting and Statuary," *Sunday Times and Noah's Weekly Messenger*, 20 November 1859, 1.

²⁵ "American Genius as Expressed in Art," *Round Table* 1 (26 December 1863): 22.

²⁶ Rodman J. Scheirr, "Sculpture Popularized and Utilized," *Potter's American Monthly* 6 (March 1876): 184.

²⁷ "Sculpture in the United States," *Atlantic Monthly* 22 (November 1868): 564.

²⁸ According to William C. Brownell, a similar trajectory occurred in American paintings around 1876-77, not coincidentally the era of the Centennial Exposition and its aftermath: "Before that year, we had what was called . . . an American school of painting; and now the American school of painting seems almost to have disappeared. . . . We are beginning to paint as other people paint. If we are to have a new 'school' hereafter, it is certain that

it will be very different from its once popular predecessor." See Brownell, "The Younger Painters of America," *Scribner's Monthly* 20 (May 1880): 1.

²⁹ Sarah Burns, *Inventing the Modern Artist: Art and Culture in Gilded Age America* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1996), 5.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 16.

³¹ Lang to Brown, 4 May 1885, Henry Kirke Bush-Brown Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C., 8:235S.

³² Royal Cortissoz, *Augustus Saint-Gaudens* (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin, 1907), 7.

³³ Homer Saint-Gaudens, ed., *The Reminiscences of Augustus Saint-Gaudens* (New York: Century Co., 1913), 1:350 (hereafter cited as *Reminiscences*).

³⁴ Edward Atkinson to John Murray Forbes, 9 June 1897, Atkinson Family Papers, Massachusetts Historical Society, Boston. Atkinson further described Saint-Gaudens as "conscious of his own power, standing for his own dignity, but extremely modest in everything that relates to personal praise, and desiring to keep in the background rather than to become conspicuous."

³⁵ Louis St. Gaudens to Annetta St. Gaudens (his wife), 23 October [1902], Augustus Saint-Gaudens Papers, Dartmouth College Library, Hanover, New Hampshire, microfilm reel 25, frames 43-44 (hereafter cited as Saint-Gaudens Papers, DCL).

³⁶ Cecilia Beaux, "Mr. Gilder's Public Activities: IV. His Relations to the Arts," *Century Magazine* 79 (February 1910): 631.

³⁷ Saint-Gaudens to Gilder, 25 October 1902, Saint-Gaudens Papers, DCL, microfilm reel 7, frame 604.

³⁸ On Gilder, see Arthur John, *The Best Years of the "Century": Richard Watson Gilder, Scribner's Monthly, and Century Magazine, 1870-1909* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1981).

³⁹ On Helena de Kay Gilder, see Thayer C. Tolles, "Helena de Kay Gilder: Her Role in the New Movement" (Master's thesis, University of Delaware, 1990); and *American National Biography*, s.v. "Gilder, Helena de Kay." Other recent publications have speculated on the nature of her relationship with Winslow Homer. See Joseph Stanton, "Winslow Homer, Helena de Kay, and Richard Watson Gilder: Posing a Rivalry of Forms," *Harvard Library Bulletin*, n.s., 5 (summer 1994): 51-72; and Sarah Burns, "The Courtship of Winslow Homer," *Antiques* 161 (February 2002): 68-75.

⁴⁰ Helena Gilder contributed illustrations to her husband's volumes of poetry, including *The New Day: A Poem in Songs and Sonnets* (New York: Scribner, Armstrong, and Co., 1876); and *Two Worlds and Other Poems* (New York: Century Company, 1891). See Doreen Bolger, et al., *In Pursuit of Beauty: Americans and the Aesthetic Movement*, exh. cat. (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1986), 316.

⁴¹ Rosamund Gilder, ed., *Letters of Richard Watson Gilder* (Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1916), 66.

⁴² It is reasonable to speculate that Helena de Kay Gilder modeled her salon evenings after those of Mrs. Arthur Bronson, her older sister who was based in Venice and Paris. Among the elite who visited Bronson's homes were Robert Browning, Henry James, and James McNeill Whistler.

⁴³ Will H. Low, *A Chronicle of Friendships, 1873-1900* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1908), 239.

⁴⁴ On Gilder as a custodian of culture, see Thomas Bender, *New York Intellect: A History of Intellectual Life in New York City from 1750 to the Beginnings of Our Own Time* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1987), 213-17; and Sylvia Yount, "'Give the People What They Want': The American Aesthetic Movement, Art Worlds, and Consumer Culture, 1876-1890" (Ph.D. diss., University of Pennsylvania, 1995), esp. 135-38. The patrician versus nouveau-riche cultural dichotomy informs much of Saul E. Zalesch's argument in "Ryder Among the Writers: Friendship and Patronage in the New York Art World, 1875-1884" (Ph.D. diss., University of Delaware, 1992).

⁴⁵ Gilder to Homer Saint-Gaudens, 6 June 1907, Saint-Gaudens Papers, DCL, microfilm reel 24, frame 283.

⁴⁶ De Kay to Gilder, [undated], Richard Watson and Helena de Kay Gilder Papers, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C., microfilm reel 285, frame 262.

⁴⁷ For further discussion of the medal, modeled with the assistance of Philip Martiny, see Thayer Tolles, ed., *American Sculpture in The Metropolitan Museum of Art. Volume 1: A Catalogue of Works by Artists Born before 1865* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1999), 301-3.

⁴⁸ Russell Sturgis, "The Fine Arts at the Paris Exposition," *Scribner's Monthly* 18 (June 1879): 173, illus. The article also included engravings after drawings by Maitland Armstrong, Charles C. Coleman, Thomas Hovenden, and Elihu Vedder. *Faith* is one of four allegorical figures at the corners of the *Monument to the Memory of General Juchault de Lamoricière*. Following its display to high acclaim at the Paris Exposition, the monument was installed in the left transept of Nantes Cathedral in 1879. See Peter Fusco and H. W. Janson, eds., *The Romantics to Rodin: French Nineteenth-Century*

Sculpture from North American Collections, exh. cat. (Los Angeles: Los Angeles County Museum of Art in association with George Braziller, 1980), 243-44; and John H. Dryfhout, *The Work of Augustus Saint-Gaudens* (Hanover, N.H.: University Press of New England, 1982), 89, no. 68.

⁴⁹ John, *The Best Years of the "Century,"* 90, 93 n. 35, raises issue with Saint-Gaudens as a collaborator.

⁵⁰ Gilder to Frances Folsom Cleveland, 21 September 1888, quoted in Gilder, ed., *Letters of Richard Watson Gilder*, 181.

⁵¹ Saint-Gaudens to Gilder, 21 July 1905, Richard Watson Gilder Papers, Manuscripts and Archives Division, New York Public Library. Prior to the June 22 celebration, Saint-Gaudens invited the Gilders to join them as their guests for the open-air masque. See Saint-Gaudens to Gilder, [June 1905], Gilder Papers, New York Public Library.

⁵² Gilder to Beaux, 10 August 1907, quoted in Gilder, ed., *Letters of Richard Watson Gilder*, 446.

⁵³ Richard Watson Gilder, "Songs of the Night," *Atlantic Monthly* 101 (March 1908): 311.

⁵⁴ Quoted in Walter Tittle, "A Sculptor of the Spirit of America: Daniel Chester French Put the National Character into Marble," *World's Work* 66 (July 1928): 304.

⁵⁵ French to William M. R. French (his brother), 3 March 1886, Daniel Chester French Family Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, box 82, quoted in Michael Tingley Richman, "The Early Career of Daniel Chester French, 1869-1891" (Ph.D. diss., University of Delaware, 1974), 268.

⁵⁶ William A. Coffin, "The Sculptor French," *Century Magazine* 59 (April 1903): 871-79.

⁵⁷ Truman Howe Bartlett, "Saint Guadens [sic] as I knew him," Truman Howe Bartlett file, 1881-1922, Paul Wayland Bartlett Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, container 47, quoted in George Gurney, "Olin Levi Warner: A Catalogue Raisonné of His Sculpture and Graphic Works" (Ph.D. diss., University of Delaware, 1978), 476.

⁵⁸ Warner's portrait medallion (destroyed) of Marion Gilder was a pendant to the one of the Gilder's son Rodman, modeled by Augustus Gaudens and enlarged by his brother Louis. This work is further discussed in Chapter 4.

⁵⁹ "Saint-Gaudens: personal notes about him by T[ruman] H[owe] B[artlett]," Truman Howe Bartlett file, 1881-1922, Bartlett Papers, Library of Congress, container 47. Bartlett's contentious relationship with Saint-Gaudens is considered in Chapter 4.

⁶⁰ On Cook, see John P. Simoni, "Art Critics and Criticism in Nineteenth Century America" (Ph.D. diss., Ohio State University, 1952); Jo Ann W. Weiss, "Clarence Cook: His Critical Writings" (Ph.D. diss., Johns Hopkins University, 1977); and Barbara Jean Stephanic, "Clarence Cook's Role as Art Critic, Advocate for Professionalism, Educator, and Arbiter of Taste in America" (Ph.D. diss., University of Maryland, 1997).

⁶¹ On Cook's involvement, see Linda S. Ferber and William H. Gerdts, *The New Path: Ruskin and the American Pre-Raphaelites*, exh. cat. (Brooklyn, N.Y.: Brooklyn Museum, 1985), 19-24.

⁶² Cook to Whitelaw Reid, 3 February 1878, Whitelaw Reid Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, microfilm reel 132, frame 119963; and "Criticism Criticized," *Studio* 1 (3 March 1883): 65-68. This article was written in response to M. G. Van Rensselaer, "The Rev. Dr. Potter on Current Criticism," *Critic* 3 (17 February 1883): 73-74.

⁶³ Cook wrote sporadically for other journals, including the *Galaxy* (1868); *Putnam's Monthly* (1868-69); *Atlantic Monthly* (1872-75); and *Scribner's Monthly* (1875-1881).

⁶⁴ Simoni, "Art Critics and Criticism," 153.

⁶⁵ See, for instance, [Clarence Cook], "The Fine Arts: The National Academy of Design. Forty-fourth Annual Exhibition," *New York Daily Tribune*, 13 May 1869, 2: "Let the Academicians enjoy in peace their own selfish exclusiveness. Let them monopolize the best places for their own works, as they have always done. The true artist, the scholar of nature, the student of life, has nothing to do with this institution. Its day is gone."

⁶⁶ Conrads, "Winslow Homer and His Critics," 25.

⁶⁷ For instance, Cook's three-volume *Art and Artists of Our Time* (New York: Selmar Hess, 1888), includes no discussion of sculpture.

⁶⁸ On Cook and his opinion of American sculpture, especially during the 1860s, see Simoni, "Art Critics and Criticism," 322-27.

⁶⁹ Cook to Reid, 21 November 1876, Reid Papers, Library of Congress, microfilm reel 132, frame 119939.

⁷⁰ Gilder journal, [1874], Gilder Papers, Archives of American Art, microfilm reel 285, frame 11.

⁷¹ [Clarence Cook], "Recent Church Decoration," *Scribner's Monthly* 15 (February 1878): 569-77. Cook's best-known effort for *Scribner's* is the series of articles on household taste, "Beds and Tables, Stools and Candlesticks," released between 1875 and

1877. They were collected and published as *The House Beautiful: Essays on Beds and Tables, Stools and Candlesticks* (New York: Scribner, Armstrong, and Company, 1878).

⁷² Gilder to Saint-Gaudens, 22 October 1902, Saint-Gaudens Papers, DCL, microfilm reel 7, frames 430-31.

⁷³ Gilder, it should be noted, sided fully with Cook in the Cesnola affair, even publishing an article, "Topics of the Time: The Metropolitan Museum and Its Director," *Century Magazine* 24 (August 1882): 625-34. The article states (627) that Saint-Gaudens and Olin Warner's opinions were solicited in this matter and they "were less favorable in some respects to the Director than those of the other sculptors." See also Simoni, "Art Critics and Criticism," 151 n. 94.

⁷⁴ Clarence Cook, "Art in America in 1883," *Princeton Review*, n.s., 11 (May 1883): 319-20.

⁷⁵ [Clarence Cook], "The Exhibition of the Architectural League," *Studio*, n.s., 7 (2 January 1892): 42.

⁷⁶ Saint-Gaudens to White, March 1878 (copy), Saint-Gaudens Papers, DCL, microfilm reel 13, frame 887.

⁷⁷ The most extended treatment of de Kay's career as an art critic is Lisa Peters, "Charles de Kay: Art Critic for the People," unpublished seminar paper, City University of New York, 1985, Gerdt's American Art Research Library. See also Docherty, "A Search for Identity," 214-15.

⁷⁸ Conrad, "Winslow Homer and His Critics," 29.

⁷⁹ Gurney, "Olin Levi Warner," 467-68. Warner modeled a portrait medallion of de Kay in 1880 (Century Association, New York). Gurney notes that de Kay and Warner do not seem to have shared a close friendship (468); the same may be said of de Kay and Saint-Gaudens.

⁸⁰ Jennifer A. Martin Bienenstock, "The Formation and Early Years of the Society of American Artists: 1877-1884" (Ph.D. diss., City University of New York, 1983), 36-38, analyzes de Kay's writings in support of the Society.

⁸¹ Eaton to Helena de Kay and Richard Watson Gilder, 21 June 1877, Gilder Papers, New York Public Library.

⁸² Charles de Kay, *Barye: Life and Works of Antoine Louis Barye* (New York: Barye Monument Association, 1889).

⁸³ Charles de Kay, "The Latest Washington Medal," *Harper's Weekly* 33 (27 April 1889): 335.

⁸⁴ M. G. Van Rensselaer, "Mr. St. Gaudens's Statue of Admiral Farragut in New York," *American Architect and Building News* 10 (10 September 1881): 119-20.

⁸⁵ The definitive source on Van Rensselaer is Lois Dinnerstein, "Opulence and Ocular Delight, Splendor and Squalor: Critical Writings in Art and Architecture by Mariana Van Rensselaer" (Ph.D. diss., City University of New York, 1979).

⁸⁶ For Van Rensselaer's fond recollections of Gilder, see Mrs. Schuyler Van Rensselaer, "Richard Watson Gilder—Personal Memories," *Outlook* 130 (8 March 1922): 376-79. Gilder passed away in 1909 while a guest in Van Rensselaer's home at 9 West Tenth Street.

⁸⁷ These articles, the result of a trip to England with Joseph Pennell in 1884, formed the basis of Van Rensselaer's book, *English Cathedrals* (1892) for which Pennell provided illustrations.

⁸⁸ Undated fragment of text for *The Reminiscences of Augustus Saint-Gaudens*, Saint-Gaudens Papers, DCL, microfilm reel 49, frame 637.

⁸⁹ Van Rensselaer to Saint-Gaudens, 4 June [1897], Saint-Gaudens Papers, DCL, microfilm reel 13, frame 495.

⁹⁰ M. G. Van Rensselaer, "Pictures of the Season in New York.—IV," *American Architect and Building News* 21 (18 June 1887): 294.

⁹¹ The roughed-out stone angels for the Morgan tomb were destroyed by fire in Cedar Hill Cemetery, Hartford, Connecticut, in 1884.

⁹² M. G. Van Rensselaer, "Saint Gaudens's Lincoln," *Century Magazine* 35 (November 1887): 37-39.

⁹³ See Dinnerstein, "Van Rensselaer," 368-96, for a listing of her published writings. Among those that concern Saint-Gaudens: "The Week in Art. The Shaw Monument for Boston Common," *Boston Evening Transcript*, 2 July 1892, 6; and "The Madison Square Garden," *Century Magazine* 25 (March 1894): 732-47 (on *Diana*).

⁹⁴ On Cox, see H. Wayne Morgan, *Kenyon Cox, 1856-1919: A Life in American Art* (Kent, Ohio, and London: Kent State University Press, 1994).

⁹⁵ Cox to Helen Finney Cox, 22 November 1883, Cox Papers, Avery Architectural and Fine Arts Library, Columbia University, New York, reprinted in H. Wayne Morgan, ed., *An Artist of the American Renaissance: The Letters of Kenyon Cox, 1883-1919* (Kent, Ohio, and London: Kent State University Press, 1995), 38.

⁹⁶ Cox to Helen Finney Cox, 22 November 1883, Cox Papers, Avery Library, reprinted in Morgan, ed., *An Artist of the American Renaissance*, 38.

⁹⁷ Kenyon Cox, "Augustus Saint-Gaudens," *Atlantic Monthly* 101 (March 1908): 300.

⁹⁸ See K. K. [Kenyon Cox], "An Out-Door Masque in New England," *Nation* 80 (29 June 1905): 519-20.

⁹⁹ Morgan, *Kenyon Cox*, 106.

¹⁰⁰ Kenyon Cox, "Sculptors of the Early Italian Renaissance," *Century Magazine* 29 (November 1884): 62.

¹⁰¹ Kenyon Cox, "Augustus Saint Gaudens," *Century Magazine* 35 (November 1887): 28-37.

¹⁰² Kenyon Cox, "The Sherman Statue," *Nation* 76 (18 June 1903): 491-92; Cox, "In Memory of Saint-Gaudens," *Architectural Record* 22 (October 1907): 249-51; Cox, *Atlantic Monthly* 101 (March 1908): 298-310; and Cox, "In Memory of Saint-Gaudens," *Philopolis* 7 (25 September 1913): 267-76.

¹⁰³ Charles de Kay, "Recent Works on Art: Important New Books by Kenyon Cox, Charles H. Caffin, and Russell Sturgis," *New York Times Saturday Review of Books*, 4 November 1905, 1. Cox's book devoted two chapters to Saint-Gaudens (revisions of his earlier articles in the *Century* [1887] and the *Nation* [1903]): "The Early Work of Augustus Saint-Gaudens" and "Saint-Gaudens's Sherman." Of other Americans, Cox wrote especially positively of Winslow Homer and William Merritt Chase.

¹⁰⁴ Kenyon Cox, *Painters and Sculptors: A Second Series of Old Masters and New* (New York: Duffield and Company, 1907), 141-44.

¹⁰⁵ Cox commented on the *Femme Inconnue* at length ("What a work of art! and, O ye gods! What a woman!"), illustrated it, and wrote a poem about it in "Sculptors of the Early Italian Renaissance," 62-66. For further discussion of the painting see T[hayer] T[olles], "Kenyon Cox, *Augustus Saint-Gaudens*," in *Augustus Saint-Gaudens, 1848-1907: A Master of American Sculpture*, exh. cat. (Paris: Somogy Éditions d'Art, 1999), 100-1.

¹⁰⁶ David B. Dearinger kindly shared his draft of a catalogue entry on this portrait from Dearinger, ed., *Catalogue of Paintings and Sculpture from the National Academy of Design* (New York: Hudson Hills Press, forthcoming).

¹⁰⁷ On the Cox relief, see Dryfhout, *The Work of Augustus Saint-Gaudens*, 181, no. 136.

¹⁰⁸ Saint-Gaudens to Cox, 31 July 1903, Cox Papers, Avery Library. Saint-Gaudens's affectionate appellations for his friends were often colorful. When Saint-Gaudens sent the 3-1/2-inch medal, he wrote, "Dear Coxy, I enclose a portrait of a feller whose character I admire as much as his "plug" and his productions and that's saying a great deal." Saint-Gaudens to Cox, 30 January 1904, Cox Papers, Avery Library.

¹⁰⁹ On Balch, see *Augustus Saint-Gaudens, 1848-1907: A Master of American Sculpture*, 154, no. 55. On Howells, see Dryfhout, *The Work of Augustus Saint-Gaudens*, 232-33, no. 168.

¹¹⁰ Dryfhout, *The Work of Augustus Saint-Gaudens*, 232.

¹¹¹ *Reminiscences*, 2:77. References to criticism and the evaluation of the sculptor's work, especially in the context of exhibition venues, are largely absent from the *Reminiscences*.

¹¹² Dryfhout, *The Work of Augustus Saint-Gaudens*, 117, no. 92; and 236, no. 170.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, 236.

¹¹⁴ On Laffan, *American National Biography*, s.v. "Laffan, William Mackay"; and Frank M. O'Brien, *The Story of the Sun* (1928; reprint, New York: Greenwood Press, 1968).

¹¹⁵ On the Tile Club and Laffan's articles, see Ronald G. Pisano, with Mary Ann Apicella and Linda Henefield Skalet, *The Tile Club and the Aesthetic Movement in America*, exh. cat. (New York: Harry N. Abrams in association with the Museums at Stony Brook, 1999). Saint-Gaudens was a member from 1883 until the club's demise in 1887. Other members included painters William Merritt Chase, Winslow Homer, and J. Alden Weir, and sculptor William O'Donovan.

¹¹⁶ On the Lathrops, *American National Biography*, s.v. "Lathrop, George Parsons"; and Patricia Dunlavy Valenti, *To Myself a Stranger: A Biography of Rose Hawthorne Lathrop* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1991).

¹¹⁷ Conrads, "Winslow Homer and His Critics," 50-51.

¹¹⁸ *Reminiscences*, 2:77.

¹¹⁹ H. Barbara Weinberg, *The Lure of Paris: Nineteenth-Century American Painters and Their French Teachers* (New York: Abbeville Press, 1991), 164.

¹²⁰ In 1908 Coffin recorded his impressions of the sculptor for Homer Saint-Gaudens in a typescript, "Reminiscences of Augustus Saint-Gaudens," preserved in the Saint-Gaudens Papers, DCL, microfilm reel 36, frames 132-45.

¹²¹ William A. Coffin, "The Shaw Memorial and the Sculptor Saint-Gaudens," *Century Magazine* 54 (June 1897): 179-93.

¹²² Coffin, "Reminiscences of Augustus Saint-Gaudens," Saint-Gaudens Papers, DCL, microfilm reel 36, frame 132.

¹²³ Mariana Griswold Van Rensselaer to Homer Saint-Gaudens, 19 March 1908 (copy), Saint-Gaudens Papers, DCL, microfilm reel 13, frame 507. Van Rensselaer also noted to Homer Saint-Gaudens of Coffin: "Nothing interested him or delighted him more than your father and his works" (frame 506).

¹²⁴ *American National Biography*, s.v. "Gilder, Jeannette Leonard."

¹²⁵ Gurney, "Olin Levi Warner," 379.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, 379-81.

¹²⁷ On Brownell, *American National Biography*, s.v. "Brownell, William Crary"; Frank Fletcher, "The Critical Values of William Crary Brownell" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Michigan, 1951); and Russell Sturgis, "William Crary Brownell as Critic on Fine Art," *International Monthly* 5 (April 1903): 448-67.

¹²⁸ William C. Brownell, "The Younger Painters of America," *Scribner's Monthly* 20 (May 1880): 1-15; 20 (July 1880): 321-35; 22 (July 1881): 322-34. Bienenstock observed that Brownell's articles were the first concentrated examination of the new movement artists appearing outside of individual exhibition reviews. See Bienenstock, "The Formation and Early Years of the Society of American Artists," 116 n. 100.

¹²⁹ Gurney, "Olin Levi Warner," 584. Gurney notes that it likely was the bust of Mrs. Henry Bradley Plant (1874; St. Luke's Hospital, New York) on view at Cottier's in 1878 that caught Brownell's eye (75, 588 n. 2).

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, 584-85.

¹³¹ W[illiam] C. Brownell, "The Sculpture of Olin Warner," *Scribner's Magazine* 20 (October 1896): 428-41.

¹³² Gurney, "Olin Levi Warner," 2, documents that Warner's oeuvre consists of more than 150 works, of which at least forty-five are portrait busts and forty-seven are medallions.

¹³³ Ripley Hitchcock, "Notes on An American Sculptor," *Art Review* 1 (March 1887): 1-5; and Cox, "Augustus Saint Gaudens," 28-37.

¹³⁴ Gurney, "Olin Levi Warner," 75, 362. Beginning in 1875, Cottier also served as Ryder's dealer and employer. See Zalesch, "Ryder Among the Writers," 33.

¹³⁵ Gurney, "Olin Levi Warner," 362-63.

¹³⁶ Richard Watson Gilder, "The Farragut Monument," *Scribner's Monthly* 22 (June 1881): 161-67; Cox, "Augustus Saint Gaudens," 28-37; and Van Rensselaer, "Saint Gaudens's Lincoln," 37-39.

¹³⁷ Cox to Gilder, 11 October 1890, Century Collection, Manuscripts and Archives Division, New York Public Library, reprinted in Morgan, ed., *An Artist of the American Renaissance*, 108.

¹³⁸ See M. G. Van Rensselaer, "The Growth of Ecclesiastical Decorative Art in America," *American Architect and Building News* 21 (11 June 1887): 280. The *Bellows* was also reproduced in a full-page illustration.

¹³⁹ [Alfred Trumble], "Everything from Everywhere," *Collector* 3 (15 September 1892): 290. The first version of *Diana* to which Trumble referred was removed from the tower in 1892 and replaced by a smaller, streamlined version in 1893. For a succinct history of the first and second versions, see Tolles, ed., *American Sculpture in The Metropolitan Museum of Art. Volume 1*, 305-9.

¹⁴⁰ Individual instances are cited in subsequent chapters, but for example, de Kay's criticism of the sleeves of the gown of *Theodore Dwight Woolsey* in the Society of American Artists exhibition in 1880 (Chapter 3) or Cook's criticism of the *Robert Richard Randall* statue following its unveiling in 1884 (Chapter 4).

¹⁴¹ Among the most lucid articles on this theme are C[hristopher] P. Cranch, "Art Criticism Reviewed," *Galaxy* 4 (1 May 1867): 77-82; "Artistic Criticism," *American Architect and Building News* 1 (22 April 1876): 130-31; Omar, "Art and Art Critics," *New York Daily Tribune*, 10 March 1877, 3; and S. G. W. Benjamin, "Art-Criticism," *Art Journal* (New York) 5 (January 1879): 29-31.

¹⁴² "Topics of the Time: Art Criticism," *Scribner's Monthly* 18 (May 1879): 135-36. Along similar lines, in M. G. Van Rensselaer, "The Rev. Dr. Potter on Current Criticism," *Critic* 3 (17 February 1883): 73-74, she writes (74): "If there is an accusation to be brought against our critical writers as a class, it is not that they are hard on all that is new, and struggling, and immature, but that they are too prone to see genius in every young and clever workman—too apt to take promise for result—too much given to pampering and spoiling the last artistic *débutante*."

Chapter 2

“I Must be Content to Labor for Reputation”: 1875-1877

In early March 1875 Saint-Gaudens returned to New York from Rome, remaining there until June 1877. During these two years, which he later described as “the usual hard ones of artists’ beginnings,”¹ he developed an extraordinary network of contacts with patrons, fellow artists, and critics. The professional and social relationships developed during this “foothold”² period positioned him to assume the mantle of America’s leading new movement sculptor and offered him the opportunity to earn major public commissions. Through his innate talent and his intrinsic gift for friendship, Saint-Gaudens infiltrated New York’s complex and rapidly changing art world and saw the fledgling beginnings of his critical reputation emerge in isolated articles and exhibition reviews. Most significantly, during the mid-1870s, the sculptor captured the support of two of the most prominent literary figures of the era who were seminal to the construction of his artistic persona. Clarence Cook, art critic for the *Daily Tribune*, offered sporadic public advocacy while Richard Watson Gilder of *Scribner’s Monthly*, provided sustained private and social promotion.

Saint-Gaudens’s return to the United States and dedication to expeditious professional growth had a personal side as well. In February 1874, while in Rome, the sculptor became engaged to a fellow artist, Augusta Homer of Roxbury, Massachusetts, whom he would not marry until he had earned a major commission and could “guarantee our future welfare.”³ Augusta’s father, Thomas J. Homer, had been a successful merchant who had suffered financial reverses during her childhood.⁴ Still, the Homer family, while

not wealthy, was comfortable and descended from a long Boston ancestry (Winslow Homer was a distant relation). In contrast, Saint-Gaudens's roots were far less rarified as a son of immigrant parents—a French father and an Irish mother—who arrived with their infant in the United States in September 1848. Growing up in humble circumstances on the Lower East Side of New York, he was not well versed in elite social customs and manners of the day.⁵ Saint-Gaudens's formal education was limited to grade-school level and he followed a traditional artisan path when he was apprenticed in 1861, at age thirteen, to Louis Avet, a French-born stone cameo cutter. He described this three-year apprenticeship as “miserable slavery.”⁶ Fortunately, Saint-Gaudens's father Bernard, a shoemaker, supported his artistic endeavors. He arranged for his son's enrollment at the Cooper Institute in 1864 and conveniently, shortly before Saint-Gaudens began attending evening classes in drawing at the National Academy, relocated his shoe business so that the store adjoined the Academy's new building on 4th Avenue and 23rd Street.⁷ Bernard Saint-Gaudens encouraged his son's trip to Paris in February 1867, which led to his acceptance the following year at the École des Beaux-Arts. He also introduced his son to several of his prominent clients⁸; however he lacked the refinement and pedigree necessary to help his son gain entrée in New York society. The sculptor's union with Augusta Homer and her family gave him social access and financial assistance as needed, benefits that served him immediately and throughout his career.

Saint-Gaudens's acknowledgment that his ability to secure monumental work, especially as a young unknown artist, was greater when he was in the presence of established American contacts and potential clients also drove his decision to return to New York. In Rome he remained apprised of possible commissions, writing to Thomas

Homer of various future possibilities (Saint-Gaudens had received the commission for the Masons' *Silence* through Levi H. Willard in 1873).⁹ In December 1874, the sculptor's patron Montgomery Gibbs wrote to inform him that potential commissions also existed for statues in Washington, D.C., and that "if you were here you would stand a chance for some of the work. Mr. [William Maxwell] Evarts and others would help."¹⁰ He assured Saint-Gaudens that when he returned from Europe, he would "do all in my power for you."¹¹ Gibbs's interest in the sculptor remained unceasing over several critical years that happened to coincide with the economic downturn generated by the Panic of 1873.

Gibbs and Evarts together provided Saint-Gaudens with seeds of access and encouragement to ensure steady career growth. He had met both men in Rome and they became his two most significant New York contacts. Gibbs, an attorney who served as counsel to the United States Treasury Department during James Buchanan's administration (1856-60), was the sculptor's first and most loyal advocate during the formative years of his career, clearly with his best interests at heart. He was living in Paris at the time he first met Saint-Gaudens in 1871.¹² In Rome Gibbs ordered an onyx cameo of Mary, Queen of Scots (1872; private collection), as well as marble copies of busts of Dante and young Emperor Augustus (recently reattributed as Augustus's grandson, Gaius).¹³ Gibbs was impressed by Saint-Gaudens's full-size seated nude *Hiawatha* (fig. 9), a composition intended to showcase the sculptor's talent to prospective patrons. Gibbs advanced the artist the funds to have the sculpture translated from clay model to plaster. In return, Saint-Gaudens produced marble portrait busts of Gibbs's daughters, Belle (1872; Museum of Fine Arts, Houston) and Florence (1872; Los Angeles County Museum of Art).¹⁴ This series of events represented a significant career break for

the young sculptor, for as he later wrote with a touch of irony: "I had been certain that, if I could ever get my wonderful production [*Hiawatha*] before the American public, I would amaze the world and settle my future."¹⁵ Writing Saint-Gaudens in April 1872, Gibbs acknowledged the sculptor's professional ambitions and desire for American exposure:

I am sure that the last thing of which I stand in need is a marble statue, particularly of the dimensions of your *Hiawatha*. But for the fact I sympathize very strongly with you in your struggles to maintain yourself here until your genius and labors shall have met with the reward to which I feel they are entitled, I would not have thought of attempting any arrangement by which you might be enabled to complete your large work and make yourself known.¹⁶

Gibbs proposed to pay for the expense of completing the *Hiawatha* in marble and to publicly exhibit it for one year in the United States before selling it and sharing with Saint-Gaudens part of the profits.¹⁷

Although this scheme did not come to pass, Gibbs provided Saint-Gaudens living expenses and studio rent, and lent him money to return briefly to New York in 1872-73. He also arranged for him to meet Evarts in 1872 and former New York state governor Edwin D. Morgan. Morgan, while in Rome in late 1873, commissioned *Hiawatha* in marble, thus allowing Saint-Gaudens to repay his debt to Gibbs.¹⁸ *Hiawatha*, drawn from Henry Wadsworth Longfellow's epic poem "The Song of Hiawatha" (1855), was completed in 1874 and arrived in the United States in late 1875 or early 1876.¹⁹ The marble went on view in Morgan's home in the company of his extensive art collection,²⁰ not quite the public location that Saint-Gaudens had envisioned for the marble. Still it was in semi-public setting, and seen by a limited and influential audience. The sculptor himself thought the figure "looks very well there."²¹

While Gibbs's support was significant and he was willing to provide guidance and contacts, his friend Evarts was more consequential to Saint-Gaudens as a patron. Evarts, a distinguished lawyer and politician, served as United States attorney general in 1868-69 and in 1872 was the chief counsel for the United States on the Geneva Arbitration, a tribunal assessing sanctions against Great Britain for aiding the Confederate effort in the Civil War. He later served as secretary of state under Rutherford B. Hayes (1877-81) and as a United States senator from New York (1885-91).²² Saint-Gaudens's first contact with Evarts was through his daughter Hettie, who in 1872 commissioned Saint-Gaudens to complete marble copies after ancient busts of Cicero and Demosthenes (both 1873-74; private collection, New York, on loan to The Metropolitan Museum of Art), popular souvenirs among educated Grand Tour travelers. When Saint-Gaudens met Evarts in Rome that spring, he promised the sculptor that he could model his portrait when they both were in the United States, a promise that Evarts kept after Saint-Gaudens returned to New York later in the year.

According to the sculptor's *Reminiscences*: "Shortly after my arrival, I began the bust of Senator Evarts in the dressing-room of his house on the southwest corner of Second Avenue and Fifteenth Street."²³ When Saint-Gaudens returned to Rome, the portrait was translated to marble by April 1874.²⁴ Evarts also later ordered copies of a bust of the emperor Augustus (now Gaius; 1872-73; private collection, New York, on loan to The Metropolitan Museum of Art) and the *Psyche of Naples* (1873-74; private collection, New York) that provided Saint-Gaudens much-needed income. No doubt, when in New York again in 1875, he hoped to benefit from Evarts's influence as well as name recognition. Existing correspondence between Evarts and Saint-Gaudens suggests

that although Evarts regarded the sculptor as somewhat of a nuisance, he generously assisted him. Saint-Gaudens, in turn, found Evarts “imperious with everybody . . . [but] nevertheless he does all in his power for a person and will for me.”²⁵

Once back in New York and, from time to time working in Boston in proximity to the Homer family, Saint-Gaudens began a calculated effort to circulate his name among other prospective patrons, as he put it, “to pursue orders.”²⁶ Above all, he actively sought out new commissions and forged ties with artists, critics, and patrons. He set up a studio in late March in the German Savings Bank Building at Fourth Avenue and Fourteenth Street, where David Maitland Armstrong, painter, mosaicist, and stained glass designer, was also soon in residence. The two men met in Rome in July 1872 at a dinner given by the sculptor William Henry Rinehart at the Falcone, a popular trattoria near the Pantheon that served as an expatriate meeting place.²⁷ Since 1869 Armstrong had been serving as United States consul to the Papal States (in 1872 he was promoted to general consul to the Kingdom of Italy) and Saint-Gaudens was laboring on *Hiawatha*. No longer with consular responsibilities, Armstrong became a close associate, valuable for his introductions to leading artistic and cultural figures in New York. Armstrong, who termed this tenure in New York for Saint-Gaudens “discouraging and depressing,”²⁸ later involved the sculptor in professional activities, notably jurying American art submissions for the Paris Exposition Universelle of 1878.

During the time spent in Boston and in the German Savings Bank Building, where Saint-Gaudens worked until he left for Paris in June 1877, he accomplished little new independent work. He put finishing touches on the full-size marbles, *Hiawatha* and *Silence* (fig. 10), already commenced in Rome. He began work on two commissioned

marble portrait busts in 1875: *Theodore Dwight Woolsey* for Yale College (fig. 26) and *Roger B. Taney* (1875-76; Supreme Court Room, United States Capitol, Washington, D.C.). The *Taney* was his first governmental commission, received through the auspices of Morgan.²⁹ Demonstrating his artistic versatility, Saint-Gaudens pursued decorative work on a small scale for Tiffany Studios³⁰ and painting—despite no extensive training in the medium—for the interior program for Boston’s Trinity Church under the guidance of John La Farge. Additionally, to earn much-needed income, the sculptor undertook teaching.³¹

Saint-Gaudens prepared sketches for potential public commissions, including in spring-summer 1875, a clay model for a seated figure of Charles Sumner, United States senator and ardent abolitionist. Augusta Homer, then with her family in Boston, had first informed Saint-Gaudens of the Sumner competition for Boston by letter.³² By late March 1875 he visited Boston to inquire about this commission and spent time there during the spring working in a space in the Studio Building where his future father-in-law Thomas Homer had an office.³³ Writing Theodore Woolsey in late April to schedule sittings for his portrait bust, Saint-Gaudens made implicit that the *Sumner* model took priority as a potential public commission, “owing to an extension of time being given for the completion of a sketch of Sen. Sumner upon which I am working in which I have much pecuniary and professional interest, and which to give me a fair chance for success will require all of my time for the first three weeks of May.”³⁴

That August, Saint-Gaudens’s seated model of Sumner was displayed in the new United States Post Office and Sub-Treasury building in Boston with twenty-five others by the likes of Martin Milmore, John Rogers, Anne Whitney, and William Wetmore

Story. While these competition models were on view for public inspection, Saint-Gaudens's work earned critical notice. The writer "Earl Marble" described his *Sumner* in the *Evening Post* as "full of life and action, but more like that of the Roman arena than the American Senate, at least that part of the American Senate typified by Mr. Sumner. The right arm is stiff and 'woodeny,' but otherwise the figure is good though it is not Sumner."³⁵ The following year, the selection committee opted for a standing figure by expatriate Thomas Ball, rather than a seated one as the terms of the competition specified.³⁶ As a result of Saint-Gaudens's disillusion with the inequity of the process, he "not only never again went into a competition, but even refused to submit sketches of any idea until a work had been definitely awarded to him."³⁷

That Saint-Gaudens realized the immense challenge he faced in establishing his career is frequently exposed in correspondence to patrons, family members, and friends. Two such examples are revealing. First is his commission for the bust of Theodore Dwight Woolsey, former president of Yale College, which was obtained through past patron Edwards Pierrepont almost immediately after Saint-Gaudens arrived in New York. After completing Woolsey's portrait in early June 1875, a likeness that apparently pleased the sitter, Saint-Gaudens then felt free to appeal for Woolsey's sponsorship. He wrote him from Boston: "I am hoping to get some work here but am not well enough known and any good words you may have to say to anybody of me here may be of great service to me."³⁸ Likewise, in lobbying to Evarts for a proposed statue of Chancellor James Kent, Saint-Gaudens proposed to execute the work at cost. The remuneration would not be pecuniary, but would "greatly aid me in my career. I am fully aware that at my age, with so few large works to point to, I must be content to labor for reputation. . . .

I am sure that if I am successful, and I have no doubt that I shall be so, in making a creditable work, its exhibition will go very far to establish my reputation here.”³⁹

In New York Saint-Gaudens continued to curry favor with patrons such as Evarts, Gibbs, Morgan, and Edwin Wallace Stoughton, lobbying aggressively for the commission for the planned monument in New York to Civil War hero Admiral David Glasgow Farragut. The sculptor had learned about a potential memorial from Morgan while he was still in Rome (the Farragut Memorial Committee for New York was formed in 1870) and began working on a bust study there. Saint-Gaudens also pursued the commission for a bronze memorial to Farragut to be erected in Washington, D.C., a commission that—much to the sculptor’s chagrin—was given to the politically-connected sculptress Vinnie Ream in February 1875, shortly before he left Rome.⁴⁰ Although the circumstances of the New York commission and its execution are beyond the scope of this study and have been thoroughly documented,⁴¹ it is important to note that the sculptor’s persuasive powers of salesmanship and familiarity with social and professional etiquette were honed while obtaining this order.⁴²

As soon as Saint-Gaudens returned to New York in March, he received a letter of introduction from Morgan to William H. Appleton, a member of the Farragut Memorial Committee.⁴³ Over the next few months Saint-Gaudens systematically gained social entrée to the well-placed individuals who comprised the executive committee for the Farragut Monumental Association, responsible for the selection of the statue.⁴⁴ He also visited members of the Farragut family; from the admiral’s widow he obtained photographs in order to do a portrait bust, a move calculated to raise her interest and awareness of him. Saint-Gaudens’s determined efforts, as he described them to his future

mother-in-law in May 1876, resulted in “very strong and direct influence bearing on . . . all but one or two members of the com[mittee].” He continued:

If I fail—I will have my mind clear on one point. I have never moved around about anything as I have this. I have made two models, a large drawing and a bust—and I have not allowed the slightest or most remote chance for my bringing influence to bear to escape me without taking advantage. I cannot think of a step that I have neglected to take.⁴⁵

The New York sculpture scene at this time was dominated by John Quincy Adams Ward, the so-called “dean of American sculptors.” Saint-Gaudens had long-admired Ward; over thirty years later, he wrote that Ward’s “work and his career, his virility and sincerity had been a great incentive to me.”⁴⁶ As a young cameo cutter and aspiring sculptor, Saint-Gaudens saw a overlifesize plaster cast of Ward’s *Indian Hunter* (bronze, 1866; Central Park, New York) on view in autumn 1865 in John Snedcor’s Broadway gallery. Its effect was profound, nothing less than a revelation as Saint-Gaudens recalled, and it certainly impacted his choice of subject for his own *Hiawatha*. Ward was president of the National Academy of Design in 1873-74, the first sculptor to assume that high-profile post. For the untested Saint-Gaudens, Ward’s approbation and example were critical. In spring 1876, he approached Ward to lobby on his behalf for the *Farragut* commission, acknowledging to his future mother-in-law that Ward was “the ‘big sculptor’ here, whose word is almost law in art matters.”⁴⁷ In spite of Ward’s willingness to endorse Saint-Gaudens (“I should most cheerfully express my faith in your ability to give them an earnest and most interesting statue”⁴⁸), the *Farragut* commission was initially awarded to Ward by a narrow margin of six votes to five. Ward, however, declined this commission because of others, an act that testifies to his supreme generosity toward younger, French-trained artists and his belief in Saint-Gaudens’s promise.⁴⁹ Saint-

Gaudens, with the power of Ward's influence behind him, thus officially earned the commission in December 1876; the bronze sculpture on its bluestone exedra (fig. 27) was unveiled in Madison Square Park in May 1881.

Also of inestimable significance was Saint-Gaudens's sudden immersion into an orbit of younger American artists and architects who together shaped, guided, and promoted each other's careers over the next several decades. Collectively the sculptor and these talented professionals held a belief in their power to transform the arts in America, to compete not only on an international level, but to create within an artistic continuum that extended back to the ancient Greeks and Romans and the Italian Renaissance. The French-trained architect Henry Hobson Richardson was already an acquaintance, for Saint-Gaudens had provided high relief panels (unlocated) for Richardson's American Merchants Union Express Company Building in Chicago in 1872-73.⁵⁰ The two men again collaborated on a memorial to Reverend Henry Eglinton Montgomery (fig. 11) for the Church of the Incarnation, the first of four sacred spaces in New York that Saint-Gaudens would help to decorate. For this memorial, Saint-Gaudens provided the high-relief bronze portrait medallion and panel with hand-modeled letters and Richardson the ornate sandstone tabernacle frame in which they are installed.

Additionally, Saint-Gaudens probably first met Stanford White and Charles McKim in 1875, whom he described as "two redheads who have been thoroughly mixed up in my life ever since."⁵¹ Then working for Richardson in his New York studio, these two socially-connected and business-savvy architects would, with William R. Mead, found McKim, Mead, and White, in 1879, the architectural firm par excellence of the Gilded Age. White and Saint-Gaudens likely first befriended each other during the

summer of 1875, although the date cannot be firmly fixed. According to the sculptor, they “came together like two sticking plasters.”⁵² Like Saint-Gaudens, McKim also studied at the École des Beaux-Arts in the late 1860s, but they did not meet until they were brought together in New York, the sculptor recalled, through “a devouring love for ice-cream.”⁵³ Further, the men shared similar aspirations for the professionalism of the artist and the renaissance of national ideals as manifested in cultural projects. Saint-Gaudens’s inspired career-long collaborations with White and McKim, especially on the sculptor’s public monuments, are well-known, thoroughly documented in literature on these men, and do not bear extensive retelling in this dissertation.

Saint-Gaudens also became acquainted with John La Farge, either through Richardson or Maitland Armstrong.⁵⁴ It is difficult to pinpoint when the two actually were introduced.⁵⁵ Saint-Gaudens credited La Farge with helping him out of a period where he was short of money and frustrated by the failure of materializing commissions.⁵⁶ La Farge was also raised in New York and of French émigré parentage, but from a decidedly higher economic and social class, enjoying a more sophisticated, urbane upbringing. La Farge, who also studied in Paris, possessed an extraordinarily broad knowledge, an informed appreciation for past art, and a wide net of contacts that suited him ideally for the eclectic artistic and architectural requirements of secular and religious structures.

Once Saint-Gaudens’s talent was tested and proven, he became La Farge’s preferred choice for commissions that involved sculpture. La Farge included Saint-Gaudens in several projects from the mid-1870s to mid-1880s, including in the workshop-like setting for the cycle of mural paintings (1876-78) on the interior of

Richardson's Trinity Church on Copley Square in Boston, work that Saint-Gaudens undertook from November 1876 until February 1877. For his work in Trinity, Saint-Gaudens painted St. James after La Farge's designs for a lunette in the north transept and he also may have assisted on St. Paul for the lower tower, completed by February 1877 when the church was consecrated.⁵⁷ There Saint-Gaudens established friendships with other harnessed talent including George W. Maynard, Francis Lathrop, and Francis Davis Millet, all artists with whom his career would repeatedly intersect in the coming decades.

La Farge and Saint-Gaudens's first professional association actually predates their collaboration at Trinity Church. Between July and September 1876 the two men were corresponding and creating preliminary models for the Edward King family tomb (fig. 12) for Island Cemetery in Newport, Rhode Island, a commission from King's widow.⁵⁸ Before the sculptor departed for France in June 1877, La Farge officially sub-contracted him to model and translate his design for the King tomb into stone. Working from La Farge's design in Paris, Saint-Gaudens later denigrated himself as "a tool who modeled for him then,"⁵⁹ a worker bee who received no independent recognition for his efforts. His characterization of his role in the project reflects his lack of control over the final design process; indeed the end result, a Corinthian column surmounted by a cross, offers little hint of Saint-Gaudens's evolving personal style. La Farge at the time also was involved in negotiations that would include Saint-Gaudens completing polychrome reredos for Saint Thomas Church in New York (discussed in Chapter 3).⁶⁰ Although their relationship was at times strained over aesthetic principles and financial matters,⁶¹ Saint-Gaudens owed much to La Farge in the earliest years of his career and valued his guidance enormously. After Saint-Gaudens completed the Saint Thomas reredos in 1877,

he acknowledged La Farge's role as seminal artistic mentor in a letter to Helena de Kay Gilder: "I hold his talent in the highest esteem and he has influenced me more than any man I know."⁶²

Interestingly, the one group of individuals with whom Saint-Gaudens did not have extremely close personal relations was American sculptors. Homer Saint-Gaudens acknowledged this fact in the *Reminiscences*: "Strangely enough, aside from Herbert Adams, my father had few sculptors close in his confidence."⁶³ The French-trained Adams was of a slightly younger generation, and as Saint-Gaudens did after 1885, spent his summers in Cornish, New Hampshire. Why Saint-Gaudens did not form personal relations with sculptors in the same manner as his friendships with White or Gilder is cause for speculation. Certainly on a professional level, White's collaboration or Gilder's promotion reaped more self-serving benefits for Saint-Gaudens than a friendship with a sculptor might have (Ward's intervention on the *Farragut* commission aside). Saint-Gaudens professed admiration for older sculptors, not only Ward, but New York-based Launt Thompson, a former teacher at the National Academy, and Rome-based William Rinehart.⁶⁴ He referred to his New York contemporaries Jonathan Scott Hartley and Olin Warner as "friends,"⁶⁵ and maintained a genial association with Daniel Chester French. And in later years, he enjoyed mentoring many younger sculptors as assistants, notably Frederick William MacMonnies and James Earle Fraser, but maintained these relationships in more paternal or avuncular veins.

National Academy of Design, New York, 1875

Against this background of beneficial professional contacts and personal friendships, Saint-Gaudens's early and resolute construction of a critical image through public exhibitions and published assessments must be evaluated. His submission of marble busts of William Maxwell Evarts (fig. 13) and Edwin Wallace Stoughton (fig. 14) to the 1875 annual exhibition of the National Academy of Design represented another facet of self-promotion for the aspiring sculptor: testing his work with an expanding and unpredictable body of critics and a wider circle of sculptors. That he chose the National Academy of Design to make his public debut is not surprising for it was the preeminent exhibition venue with ample opportunity for broad public exposure, despite its inconsistent and marginal commitment to sculpture.

The portraits, both completed as commissions, were lent to the annual by the sitters,⁶⁶ the result of Saint-Gaudens appealing to Evarts and Stoughton as a means of helping him spread his name. Having only recently returned to the city weeks before the annual opened, the sculptor acted expeditiously, for in mid-March he wrote his fiancée Augusta Homer that the busts would be included.⁶⁷ Saint-Gaudens had received the commission for Stoughton's portrait through Evarts while in New York in 1872, and it was translated to marble in Rome the following year.⁶⁸ Stoughton (1818-1882) was a prominent New York patent attorney, who, like Evarts, participated in the resolution of the closely contested Hayes-Tilden election of 1876, and between 1877 and 1879 was envoy extraordinary and minister plenipotentiary to Russia.⁶⁹

Of Saint-Gaudens's two busts, the *Stoughton* is the more classicizing. The facial features are distinctly individualized with a prominent nose and rounded chin. However, the classical drapery, cut in deep folds, and the stylized heavy curls of the hair hearken

back to the mid-century style of combining a realistic likeness with anachronistic ennobling classical devices. The *Evarts* is the more successful and innovative, although still grounded in the quasi-neoclassicism of Saint-Gaudens's Roman tenure. The bare chest with undercut shoulders is terminated in the ancient herm form. By contrast, Evarts's piercing shadowed eyes, hawkish nose, sunken cheeks, and thin lips are rendered with consummate fidelity. The dignified head is turned to the right with a resonating vigor that informs the best of the sculptor's later work.

The fiftieth annual exhibition of the Academy, which ran from April 8 to May 29, included an abundant 533 objects and drew extensive critical notice and unusually good attendance. Although highly inclusive, the show was among the most contentious in years and much of the press coverage was, in fact, negative. In essence, it represented the laying of groundwork for the new movement in which Saint-Gaudens would soon be at the epicenter. Complaints from younger cosmopolitan artists had arisen in 1874 when the hanging committee for that annual rejected eight stylistically progressive works by academician La Farge, put one of James McNeill Whistler's paintings out of sight, and hung one exhibitor's piece on its side.⁷⁰ Despite these occurrences, the 1874 exhibition was more inclusive; this, according to the *Times*, "was undoubtedly owing to the vigorous exertions made by Mr. [John Quincy Adams] Ward and the other officers of the Academy to render the collection a worthy representation of American art."⁷¹ While critical praise centered on the work of older artists such as Frederic Edwin Church and William Page, there was growing sentiment that younger foreign-trained artists who emphasized subjective style over thematic content were spawning what Cook described in the *Daily Tribune* as "a new departure."⁷²

In 1875 participants were unusually attuned to the selection and placement of their work. Ongoing debate centered on the “never exhibited” rule that excluded a work of art previously displayed in a gallery or artist’s studio from the Academy’s show and therefore precluded potential sales and additional critical exposure.⁷³ Younger artists with smaller-scale figural and genre subjects dominated the annual. Many academicians did not send work at all, with such exceptions as Albert Bierstadt, Daniel Huntington, and Eastman Johnson. According to the *Daily Tribune*, “all the vitality of the present exhibition comes not from [the established Academicians], but from those who are most opposed to them in doctrine and most removed from them in practice.”⁷⁴ Exhibiting for the first time were foreign-trained painters such as Toby Rosenthal, Frederick Bridgman, Wyatt Eaton, and William Merritt Chase, with the broadly painted dark Munich aesthetic prevailing, as it would for the next several years. While many critics applauded the impact of foreign schooling, they denounced the derivative European-influenced themes.⁷⁵ However, prescient writers sensed a new aesthetic emerging that was symptomatic of national progress in the arts in which facile technique was coupled with original and fresh subject matter (this was a concept which the press later to sculpture).

Saint-Gaudens’s portraits of Evarts and Stoughton were placed in the northwest room along with a handful of sculptures and some thirty paintings, including two by Stoughton’s wife, Mary Fiske. The customary space for the display of sculpture in the annuals, it was deemed “the rubbish room” for those paintings not rejected, but not proficient enough to hang elsewhere.⁷⁶ The dozen sculptures included Olin Levi Warner’s bronze medallion of Leonora Hazeltine (unlocated)⁷⁷; Theodore Baur’s two unidentified bronze portrait busts and a *Sleeping Cherub* (unlocated); Robert Cushing’s portraits of

Charles Hodge and the Honorable John Kelly (unlocated); and Byron Pickett's portrait bust of an unidentified sitter. Of his fellow sculptors, only Warner shared Saint-Gaudens's level of academic training for he had followed in Saint-Gaudens's footsteps, entering the atelier of François Jouffroy in March 1870 and the École des Beaux-Arts the following October. Baur, born in Wuerttemberg, Germany, came to the United States in 1850 and pursued architectural sculpture. Cushing and Pickett were undistinguished local sculptors, with Cushing the only frequent participant in the Academy annuals.

Collectively, the sculpture elicited scant and shallow critical response, which is not surprising given the undistinguished caliber of the work, the press's preoccupation with the annual's fiftieth anniversary, the "not previously exhibited" issue, and the predominance of the younger generation of foreign-trained painters. Of some thirty published reviews, just three discussed sculpture, all cursorily. The writer for the inaugural New York edition of the esteemed London *Art Journal*, put it succinctly: "The display of sculptured works is simply lamentable."⁷⁸ This assessment echoes a theme that had resonated throughout the history of nineteenth-century Academy annuals. In the last paragraph of the fourth of four reviews published in the *Nation*, Earl Shinn, writing anonymously, raised a valid point: "Our prominent sculptors appear to have applied themselves to monumental work during the year, and there is hardly any plastic art on exhibition."⁷⁹ Shinn's observation is a point well-taken, for prestigious and lucrative monumental commissions habitually precluded submission of staple fare portraits to the annual by the established likes of Ward, Launt Thompson, and Charles Calverley.⁸⁰ Shinn endorsed three works as "all that require indication": Cushing's bronze bust of John Kelly, Baur's "decidedly elegant" *Sleeping Cherub*, and Saint-Gaudens's "fairly

good” *Evarts*.⁸¹ Similarly, the *Daily Graphic*, calling the collection “reasonably rich in portraits,” cited Cushing’s *Kelly* and Saint-Gaudens’s two portraits.⁸²

On a critical level, Saint-Gaudens’s first showing at an exhibition venue was neither remarkable, nor a failure. On the one hand, his work was acknowledged in passing, on the other it was equivocally received. This indifferent response was customarily endemic to sculpture exhibited at the Academy annuals, a truth that the sculptor would have acknowledged. Saint-Gaudens also would have been familiar with the chronic paucity of selected sculpture and sub-par installation standards at the annuals. Still, his avowed purpose was achieved: to put his work in front of an American viewing audience and to announce his ability to render a truthful likeness. More significant perhaps was the fact that Saint-Gaudens *did* participate in this watershed exhibition, a defining moment in the direction of American art. While the character of the exhibited paintings indicated a shift toward a new aesthetic, the sculpture would not belie a change from its late neoclassical leanings toward a fresh and original Beaux-Arts inspired style for several years to come.

Although the *Evarts* earned only qualified plaudits at the 1875 annual, it became Saint-Gaudens’s early signature image, one forwarded by the artist himself and a small circle of writers as a sculptural harbinger. In autumn 1874, while the sculptor was still in Rome, it had been mentioned in an article on promising American sculptors that featured Martin Milmore, Albert Harnisch, Franklin Simmons, and Saint-Gaudens. It was authored by expatriate Anne Brewster, a foreign correspondent for the *Boston Daily Advertiser* and it was the first significant American press that Saint-Gaudens received.⁸³ Brewster described him as “one of those young Americans whose industry equals his

cleverness,” and who had “the spirit and fire of the French school in his mode of study.” Following complimentary descriptions of *Silence* and *Hiawatha*, she commended Saint-Gaudens’s ability to create not only a realistic portrait, but also one infused with sure execution and a confident handling of human form. The *Evarts* bust, along with those of Edwards and Margaretta Pierrepont (both 1872-74; Smithsonian American Art Museum, Washington, D.C.) and Stoughton were classified as “good honest likenesses, modelled with sincerity and knowledge, as well as artistic feeling.”⁸⁴

A year later, in October 1875, Saint-Gaudens received what was his most public critical recognition to date: an extensive notice on the *Evarts* portrait in *Appleton's Journal*. Then a weekly, *Appleton's* was a widely circulated general interest periodical with a consistent commitment to publishing on art-related topics. The writer of the article observed that “Mr. St. Gaudens has of late made a good deal of reputation by the life and beauty of his works,” further noting “this head of *Evarts* gained great commendation from the artists in Rome.” A lengthy description of the portrait followed, here in part:

Every one familiar with Mr. *Evarts's* refined and intellectual countenance will recognize this bust as a remarkably happy likeness of the original. It is spirited and entirely free from the vulgar clap-trap look of pomposity and self-consciousness by which inferior artists strive to lend dignity to their work, and to atone for the deficiency of their appreciation of fine and important characteristics. . . . Mr. St. Gaudens has displayed, in modeling Mr. *Evarts's* thin face, uncommon appreciation and artistic sensitiveness. Though the jaw-bone is indicated clearly through the somewhat worn lines of the cheeks, this part of the face is neither coarsely caricatured nor at all unbeautiful, and all the power and massiveness of Mr. *Evarts's* finely-chiseled brow and forehead have been most truly and delicately defined by the nice instinct of the artist.⁸⁵

The journalist then went on to praise at length the felicitous handling of *Evarts's* hair: “While the hair on most busts we see lies in shapeless bunches, and follows meaningless lines, the hair in this one is singularly light, and its locks are massed and curved as if

wind could lift them or a shake of the head entirely derange their position.”⁸⁶ The article was most likely authored by Susan Nichols Carter, a fair and open-minded critic who wrote for *Appleton's* between 1871 and 1877 and was friendly with the Gilder circle.⁸⁷ Her appreciation of the *Evarts* bust, particularly the faithful rendering of facial features coupled with artistic feeling, revealed her personal commitment to technical excellence as the primary measure of a work's success.

Centennial International Exhibition, Philadelphia, 1876

Saint-Gaudens's next submission to an art venue was the Centennial International Exhibition in Philadelphia, ostensibly organized to celebrate the centennial of the nation's birth, but in reality to champion American industry, invention, and culture in a very public and propagandistic forum. The major art event of 1876, it opened on May 10 and closed six months to the day later, during which there were almost ten million admissions to the fairgrounds.⁸⁸ The art display, comprising some 3646 objects from twenty nations, was presented in two buildings in Fairmount Park: Memorial Hall, the main building, and the Annex located behind it to accommodate overflow.

For Saint-Gaudens, the Centennial represented an opportunity to introduce his work to a mass audience in an international context. When John W. Forney, charged with publicizing the Centennial and selecting American objects in Europe, visited Saint-Gaudens's studio in Rome, a janitor informed him that the sculptor “contemplated an appropriate contribution to our Exposition.”⁸⁹ While still in Rome in 1874, the sculptor considered submitting an ambitious ideal composition, a Roman slave crowning the

young Emperor Augustus with laurel.⁹⁰ *Hiawatha* and *Silence* also would have been likely candidates, but ultimately the practicalities of Saint-Gaudens's situation and obligations to his patrons dictated his choice, and he was represented by just one sculpture, the portrait of Evarts.⁹¹ The committee on selection that chose Saint-Gaudens's marble included established realist sculptors Henry Kirke Brown and Ward, neither of whom submitted works. Whether Saint-Gaudens had yet met Brown is unknown, but as discussed above, he knew Ward well.

Shortly before the display opened, Saint-Gaudens traveled to Philadelphia to attend to the placement of his piece and to see and study the art installation. *Evarts* was located in the Grand Central Hall, Gallery B in Memorial Hall, in what Saint-Gaudens described as a "first rate position."⁹² Despite its choice location and abundant critical analysis of the art display, Saint-Gaudens's bust was all but ignored by the press.⁹³ That his submission was a more mundane portrait (despite Evarts's renown), rather than a narrative subject with broader audience appeal certainly must have been a contributing factor.

As has often been noted, the Centennial Exhibition represents the great gathering—and swansong—of neoclassical sculpture.⁹⁴ It was also the largest showing of contemporary European art on American shores to date. The 675 sculptures were arranged by nation. In this brief concurrence of the neoclassical idealism and Beaux-Arts naturalism, the former overwhelmingly prevailed, not in the least due to the display of some 325 Italian marbles. These highly-finished overwrought genre subjects captured the lion's share of public attention (if not critical favor) and were eagerly purchased by American patrons. Some consideration was given to the smaller French section of about

seventy pieces, including submissions by Jules Dalou and Auguste Bartoldi, which collectively presented a lively naturalistic aesthetic played out in the more tactile medium of bronze. There were 162 American sculptures, the majority by neoclassical expatriate practitioners whose lengthy careers contributed to the perpetuation of this now-stale aesthetic. Though many of these works were not new, they were unfamiliar to American audiences largely untutored in aesthetic matters. Among these were Randolph Rogers's oft-replicated *Nydia, the Blind Flower Girl of Pompeii* (ca. 1853-54; The Metropolitan Museum of Art); Story's towering *Medea* (1865; probably the version at the Peabody Essex Museum, Salem, Mass.); and Edmonia Lewis's macabre *Death of Cleopatra* (1876; Smithsonian American Art Museum). Five American sculptors received citations for their work (compared to sixteen Italians and twelve French), including John Rogers who sent a complete set of his "Groups" and Erastus Dow Palmer for his full-size bronze *Chancellor Robert Livingston* (1874; Court of Appeals, Albany, N.Y.) which earned a first-class medal. Howard Roberts's *The First Pose* (1873-76; Philadelphia Museum of Art), an academic nude marble in a transitional style, drew consistent praise for the quality of its technical execution. Roberts enrolled at the École des Beaux-Arts in October 1866 and worked in the ateliers of Alexandre Dumont and Charles Alphonse Gumery.⁹⁵ Like Saint-Gaudens and Warner, Roberts was representative of the shift from Italy to Paris as the dominant center for art training.

For the likes of Saint-Gaudens and other younger artists, the message of the Centennial was resoundingly clear. Rather than affirming the host country's artistic strengths when measured against visiting nations, it laid bare its shortcomings in quality and training. The sentiment that American art at the Centennial had failed as a measure of

cultural, economic, and material progress in the post-Civil War era was echoed by artists and critics alike. During the selection process, Henry Kirke Brown observed: "It was the worst lot of trash I ever looked at. . . . We shall be represented in the exhibition by . . . no statuary of any account by American sculptors."⁹⁶ The pell-mell quality of the American sculpture display drew frequent comment. For instance, John F. Weir reported it "lacked order and arrangement. . . . Nor was there any evidence of an attempt to illustrate the progress and present condition of this art in the United States, of which an interesting exhibit might well have been made."⁹⁷ Gilder summarized the prevailing sentiment of the new school artists: Americans lagged far behind their European counterparts in education, cultivation, and achievement. Writing in *Scribner's Monthly*, he saw the Centennial as an impetus for artistic progress, a seminal turning point: "We look forward upon the next quarter of a century to the only general movement in art that our young country has ever known. We are ready for it, and stimulus and direction have come just when we need it. Hitherto, our art has been desultory, patchy, and partial."⁹⁸

Only with hindsight is it possible to measure the Centennial as a prescient transitional moment, a marker in the history of American sculpture from one era to the next.⁹⁹ In addition to Saint-Gaudens, two other newcomers participated, who each in their own way would redirect the course of American sculpture toward a new school Beaux-Arts aesthetic. Warner exhibited a colossal plaster medallion of the popular Philadelphia-born actor Edwin Forrest (1876 or before; unlocated) while Daniel Chester French displayed his large plaster *The Minute Man* (1871-75; bronze, Minuteman National Park, Concord, Mass.) in the Massachusetts Pavilion. Although these artists had yet to earn

individual acknowledgment, they collectively represented the ideal of a new generation of American sculptors that was espoused by forward-thinking critics.

Saint-Gaudens's unnoticed participation in the Centennial aside, he continued to cultivate his presence in New York. On May 15, 1876, he was present for the formal unveiling of his allegorical female *Silence* in the New York City Lodge of the Grand Lodge of the Masonic Order on Sixth Avenue and Twenty-third Street. As noted above, Levi H. Willard commissioned *Silence*, the artist's second full-length ideal figure, in 1873 during Saint-Gaudens's brief visit to New York. The commission was secured through the auspices of Saint-Gaudens's father, a Mason, and his second New York cameo employer, Jules Le Brethon. The Masons chose this personification of a female with her forefinger pressed to her lips in a gesture of secrecy because "silence is a virtue prized by Freemasons, who hold that more can be learned through listening than through speaking."¹⁰⁰ Modeled during his second stay in Rome, *Silence* was translated into marble following Saint-Gaudens's return to New York in 1875 with results that pleased neither patron nor sculptor.¹⁰¹ For his part, Saint-Gaudens lamented the disposition of the veil and robe, preferring instead a broad, heavy drapery. Nevertheless, the piece was installed prominently on the lodge's main staircase. A brief notice in the *New York Times* described *Silence* as "habited in classic costume. . . . The face is noble and expressive, and the whole figure imposing."¹⁰²

National Academy of Design, New York, 1877

The lack of critical attention Saint-Gaudens received for his *Evarts* at the Centennial, in fact the limited and sporadic attention from the press thus far, was more than offset by an ironic, and ultimately felicitous twist of events resulting from the sculptor's rejection from the National Academy's annual exhibition in spring 1877. The fifty-second annual, which ran from April 3 to June 2, included 684 works. Saint-Gaudens submitted a small plaster sketch from his Roman tenure, which he later described as "a young girl lying on her face on a low couch, dandling an infant in her arms."¹⁰³ One of numerous exercises in which the sculptor worked out preparatory three-dimensional studies for ideal themes, it was an unusual choice for submission to the Academy by any standard, not because of the plaster medium, but because it was a sketch. To be sure, Saint-Gaudens produced little new independent sculpture during the time he was working on Trinity Church and for Tiffany Studios, and by necessity would have fallen back on earlier work. However, he was well aware of the prevailing attitudes surrounding the acceptability of exhibiting what essentially was seen as an academic exercise in modeled form or a suggestive expression of an imagined concept.

Saint-Gaudens gained his familiarity with the sketch (*ébauche*) during his rigorous academic training in Paris, first at the Petite École, and then in the Jouffroy atelier at the École des Beaux-Arts.¹⁰⁴ As a matriculant at the École, to which he was admitted in March 1868, he gained further proficiency in drawing and modeling studies from the nude. Because of this Parisian study, one may assume he was highly sensitized to the interrelated debates of finish and innovation. As he explained in an 1875 letter to his future wife, he doubted that the sketches executed in Rome would generate any commissions: "They are not finished enough I am afraid for the more I do the more I see

how little the public understand [sic] and how necessary it is that a sketch be highly *polished* for them to understand it. . . . The photos of my sketches decidedly make impressions only on artists.”¹⁰⁵ Saint-Gaudens, of course, intended that these working sketches as *première pensées*, spontaneous quests for satisfactory ends, rather than detailed ends in themselves. One wonders then why he submitted this unfinished work: was it simply a maneuver to attract a potential patron to finance its enlargement and translation or was it a principled attempt by an aspiring young artist to advocate to American patrons who he felt were unsophisticated in aesthetic taste, the legitimacy of publicly displaying a sketch?

Not surprisingly, *Sketch in Plaster* (destroyed) was rejected by the jury. If Cook’s published explanation in the *Daily Tribune* is to be believed (and there is little other documentation surrounding this incident), the rejection was not made on the grounds that it was an unpolished work of art conceived preliminary to a final, larger composition or that it referenced no literary or thematic prototype. There simply was not enough room to display it. Further, according to Cook, it occurred despite an apparent invitation from a member of the hanging committee to submit the small plaster.¹⁰⁶

The 1877 annual proved a crucial turning point for the new movement artists. This annual engendered fierce dissent both within the Academy’s membership and among non-members. It left critics to grapple with a wide-ranging variety of issues concerning themes and technical effects, international training, and generational differences. In order to correct previous charges of hostility toward the younger artists, the hanging committee was composed of two younger academicians—Charles Miller and Wordsworth Thompson—who had studied abroad in Paris and Munich, and a third—

Thomas LeClear—who was an older native-trained portrait and genre painter (which of these men might have encouraged Saint-Gaudens’s submission is not known). The three men presented an unusually inclusive annual in which the work of younger cosmopolitan painters was prominently placed. The hanging committee gave premier on-the-line spots to large works by younger non-members such as Munich-trained Frank Duveneck’s *Turkish Page* (1876; Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts) and Walter Shirlaw’s *Sheep Shearing in the Bavarian Highlands* (ca. 1877; private collection) as well as French-trained Wyatt Eaton’s *Harvesters at Rest* (ca. 1877; unlocated). Disgruntled conservative academician Jervis McEntee noted in his vivid diary that “the Munich students work prevails and the genuinely American productions are put aside to give prominence to the foreign looking art.”¹⁰⁷ Certain academicians, led by president Daniel Huntington, demanded a more equitable rehanging, but the Academy’s constitution gave the hanging committee sole jurisdiction over the exhibition. The motives of this committee were further called into question, resulting in the decision of the Academy Council on April 20 to change its constitution so that each Academician was guaranteed to receive up to eight feet “on the line” in following annuals,¹⁰⁸ a decision quickly rescinded.

The diversity and originality of these contributions and the prospects they held for American art were themes that resonated throughout the published critical assessments of the show. The *New York Times* called for a generational passing of arms: “We must look to Americans who have studied in Europe for a new departure in art.”¹⁰⁹ Likewise, Cook observed: “Whoever is broadly interested in Art as a high and necessary form of national development, will find this year’s exhibition full of quickening suggestions.”¹¹⁰ In an

extensive editorial in the *Daily Tribune* on May 19, Cook outlined the ills of the Academy's aims, also emphasizing the need for a turning point toward "fresh blood; young heads and young hands."¹¹¹

The rejection of Saint-Gaudens's plaster sketch certainly was based on some measure of false pretense for as desultory as the conditions for exhibiting sculpture at the Academy were, fifteen pieces were accepted, albeit representing a scant two percent of the entire exhibition.¹¹² The submissions included John Rogers's *The Mock Trial* and *School Days*, and five works by Jonathan Scott Hartley, including *Diogenes*, *The Young Samaritan*, *King Rene's Daughter*, and a portrait of his future father-in-law George Inness. The regular, if not ordinary, repertory of portraits in marble and plaster were submitted by the likes of Robert Cushing, Harriet Holbrook, Edmund Palmer, D. B. Sheahan, and Amelie R. Wilbeaux. Most significant was William O'Donovan's highly finished bronze portrait bust of hanging committee member LeClear (fig. 15), which was not only prominently installed, but was illustrated in the accompanying catalogue.¹¹³ Shortly before the opening of the exhibition it was relocated from the northwest room to the west room where it was placed conspicuously and under more favorable lighting conditions.¹¹⁴

That the sculpture revealed to the critics little of the artistic promise held in the paintings is borne out by reviews of the show. Gilder, writing in *Scribner's Monthly*, found "the sculpture . . . so huddled that it is impossible to see or judge of it." He commended the work by Hartley, an artist with whom Saint-Gaudens had collaborated the previous year, and a portrait head by a "pupil" of Saint-Gaudens, probably Edmund Palmer.¹¹⁵ More significant, Gilder observed pointedly that "we are sorry not to find

represented [Saint-Gaudens's work],"¹¹⁶ telling indication that Gilder was by now personally committed to advocating a sculptor who shared his aesthetic convictions. O'Donovan's bust received the greatest coverage, deemed by the *Times*, "a clever work . . . and said to be a good likeness."¹¹⁷ The *Evening Post* was even more enthusiastic in its praise: "Mr. O'Donovan's bronze portrait-bust of the artist LeClear is emphatically the best piece of sculpture in the exhibition," a point reiterated by other writers as well. Revealing in the context of Saint-Gaudens's rejection, the author, probably the *Post*'s art critic George Sheldon, continued: "Sculpture . . . must be not only pleasing and emotional, but learned as well, and at the same time the whole apparatus of learning must be tucked away out of sight."¹¹⁸ Although Cook dismissed the sculpture submissions as "unimportant,"¹¹⁹ he provided the most extensive descriptive and critical analysis of the display and installation issues. Three points emerge as particularly useful in context of Saint-Gaudens: first, Cook found the installation conditions abysmal, with much of the sculpture "huddled together under the window in the North-West Room, where the light falls so perpendicularly upon it that only two or three of the busts can be tolerably well seen." Second, he deemed O'Donovan's bust of LeClear an excellent portrait, arguably the best sculpture in the exhibition. Finally, he issued a warning that would ring particularly true over the next several years: "Sculpture always ventures into dangerous ground when it tries to do the work of painting."¹²⁰

Saint-Gaudens's exclusion from this group of artists was a rallying cry for Cook, who, in essence, threw down the gauntlet to simultaneously defend and promote the sculptor. The apparent indignity suffered by Saint-Gaudens and the need for more sympathetic conditions for the display of sculpture became a central point of several

articles by Cook and others in the pages of the *Daily Tribune* after the opening of the 1877 annual. In his editorial of May 19, Cook cited instances where hopes raised were not fulfilled, the work of new artists not hospitably treated, and talent discouraged in favor of selling pictures. Moreover, he raised the issue of artists wrongly rejected. His case-in-point was Saint-Gaudens. Cook's criticism is worth quoting at length because he set Saint-Gaudens in the context of American sculpture, colorfully described the inadequate installation conditions at the Academy, and firmly allied himself with up-and-coming artists:

Much interest has been felt of late in a young sculptor—Mr. Augustus A. Gaudens [sic]—but the public has had small opportunity to learn anything of the quality of his talent—a bust of Secretary Evarts sent to the Philadelphia Exhibition, and some small figures designed for Tiffany & Co., the silversmiths, and also shown at Philadelphia, comprising, I believe, all that he has exhibited. We have so few men who have shown any real talent for sculpture (we have had ambitious stonecutters in plenty and spoiled stonecutters in plenty), that to many it was not the least of the good promises held forth as to the Exhibition that a piece of Mr. A. Gaudens's work was to be there. This was reckoned on with certainty, for the sculptor had been expressly invited by a member of the Hanging Committee to send his work, and he has complied. But when the Exhibition opened Mr. A. Gaudens's model was not to be found, and on inquiry it was learned it had been rejected. It was thought at first that this was because the piece was a sketch. But no, the reason given was because there was no room! Meanwhile, the marble-topped heater in the room called by courtesy the Sculpture Room, large enough to have held Mr. A. Gaudens's sketch with room to spare, is found to be occupied by three little heads each as large as an apple, silly bits of trifling an artist should have been ashamed to send, or an Academy to accept. Mr. O'Donovan's bust of Mr. LeClear, one of the Hanging Committee, had found room for it outside the Sculpture Room, but, inside of it or outside of it, there was no room found for Mr. A. Gaudens! How the artist whose work has been thus rudely rejected may feel we have no knowledge, but our concern with the matter is a purely selfish one; we think only of the wrong done to ourselves as members of the community. We go to the Academy to see and enjoy what is being done by the young men of promise; we hear them talked of in society, in the street, in the clubs; we are told that they are to have something in the Academy; and then we find that some small jealousy or silly whimsy, among the men in power, has deprived us of a pleasure to which we had a right. . . . Men who

show the ability of Mr. Julian Weir, of Mr. [John Henry] Witt, of Mr. Millet, of Mr. Chase, of Mr. A. Gaudens, are not to be hurt by [the] Hanging Committee.¹²¹

Although Cook was wrong in assuming that Saint-Gaudens's work had previously appeared only at the Centennial, his impassioned defense of the artist not only qualified Saint-Gaudens as one of the "new men," but, in Cook's eyes, as *the* sculptor of promise. Also patently demonstrated is a critic rallying for an artist's cause for self-serving purposes, in this case, to denounce an injustice perpetrated against the larger art-loving public.

Cook's editorial spawned a lively, if hair-splitting, exchange with the sculptor O'Donovan. Among the issues were the election to associate member of the animal painter John Henry Dolph, the rejection of portraits because they were not deemed true likenesses of the sitters, and the mercenary leanings of the Academy.¹²² If Cook praised O'Donovan's bust of LeClear on May 5, on June 9, he found it "very repulsive," its favored placement material evidence of that sculptor's allegiance to the hanging committee and his lack of sympathy for others "who are left out in the cold, and treated with contempt."¹²³ In his final diatribe, on June 27, in which he again championed Saint-Gaudens, Cook stated that the dispute surrounding the academy was one of just treatment and principle: "Persons are brought into the discussion only as illustrations, and while it would not be possible to carry on the argument without these personal allusions, there is not, on my part at least, any personal partisanship in the matter." Referring again to rejection of Saint-Gaudens's sketch, Cook clarified his stance:

It was not Mr. St. Gaudens for whom I took up the cudgels; it was the principle. There is always room in the Academy as there is everywhere, for good work, and if there is not room, room can always be made. . . . [the sketch] was sent in, and returned on the express plea that there was not room. Yet it is well known that there was plenty of room. . . . And, as if

to make this ill-treatment more marked, a bust by Mr. O'Donovan . . . was placed by itself in a good light in another room.

Again, reiterating the lamentable conditions for sculpture in the northwest room, Cook concluded:

It was not that Mr. St. Gaudens, Mr. Hartley, Mr. Edmund Palmer, and others were treated unjustly, nor that Mr. O'Donovan was unjustly favored that I complained. The essence of my complaint was that flagrant injustice was done to somebody, and that gross favoritism was shown to somebody else. I do not like Mr. O'Donovan's bust, but supposing he had been treated as Mr. St. Gaudens was, and Mr. St. Gaudens favored as he was, I hope I should have objected. I certainly should have been bound to object, for the principle would have been the same.¹²⁴

As earnest as Cook appears, his professed motives may be questioned when viewed in the overall context of his actual persona. In his first defense of Saint-Gaudens, he clearly supported him as an individual talent of promise while also admitting a self-serving agenda. In the latter review, Cook dehumanized the artist, distancing himself from him and analyzing the chain of events as an impartial and unprejudiced critic lobbying for higher artistic principles. In truth, Cook was inextricably linked with Saint-Gaudens and the Gilder circle, a staunch partisan of progressive younger artists. As discussed more extensively below, he was present with the sculptor at the June 1, 1877, founding of the Society of American Artists, several weeks before Cook professed to renounce "personal partisanship" and just days before Saint-Gaudens departed for Paris.

Thus the notoriety generated by a negative incident garnered Saint-Gaudens far more publicity than heretofore, albeit as an artist wronged rather than on the merit of his work. From a critical standpoint, it positioned him as the leading sculptor of the new movement, with Cook and Gilder firmly in his camp. Saint-Gaudens's reaction to the critical controversy is unknown for it is not mentioned in his correspondence, nor indeed

was he in this country during its final playing out in the pages of the *Daily Tribune*. He became aware of it after arriving in Paris: Helena de Kay Gilder wrote him on June 15, “C.C. . . . is having war to the knife with O’Donovan.”¹²⁵ Ironically, years later, Saint-Gaudens capitulated: “It is only proper to add that the rejection of the sketch was justifiable. It was entirely too unfinished a product to be exhibited, particularly considering the general attitude of artists at that time.”¹²⁶

Founding of the Society of American Artists, 1877

The groundwork for the founding the Society of American Artists had been laid during the National Academy of Design annual in 1875. Disappointed by the selection and hanging of paintings, Helena de Kay Gilder proclaimed that the jury had “determined the ‘new school’ shall have no chance.”¹²⁷ She and such other painters as La Farge, Abbott Thayer, Albert Pinkham Ryder, Maria Oakey, William Morris Hunt and eight of his female students participated in a “salon de refusés” of some forty works at Daniel Cottier’s Fifth Avenue gallery, a show that opened just two weeks after the Academy’s.¹²⁸ The Cottier show, with its innovative decorative and Barbizon-inspired aesthetics, had the critical backing of Richard Watson Gilder, Charles de Kay, and Cook, writing for *Scribner’s Monthly*, the *Times*, and the *Daily Tribune* respectively. This powerful progressive triumvirate advocated the exhibition and articulated the causes of the younger European-influenced artists—inclusiveness of styles, poeticism of subjects, equality in hanging standards—themes that would refrain over the next decade. It was likely Gilder who proposed in *Scribner’s Monthly* that “it would be interesting to have

frequent exhibitions . . . in order to keep fully before our eyes what is going on in different directions among the artists.”¹²⁹ The lesson of the Cottier exhibition’s success lay in the ability of artists and critics to work hand-in-hand to advance mutual motives and hinted at the potential for a permanent scheme for an independent group exhibition. By 1877 such critics as Cook, de Kay, and Sheldon had joined Gilder in publishing pleas for an alternate academy. As the artist Will H. Low later characterized the situation: “There ensued a wordy war in the press, for the young invaders found their partisans, which has as a result the formation of a new art organization.”¹³⁰ In late April Sheldon proposed that artists band together to found an alternative forum for the exhibition and sale of paintings, a sentiment echoed by de Kay in early May.¹³¹

Two months after Saint-Gaudens’s rejection from the Academy in 1877, the sculptor joined with Helena de Kay Gilder, Wyatt Eaton, and Walter Shirlaw on June 1, to form the Society of American Artists. Gilder and Cook sat in as public relations agents at the Gilders’ “Studio” on East Fifteenth Street. The four founding members represented a cross-section of the young generation of artists. Helena Gilder’s training as a still-life painter in the La Farge mold was home-based. Eaton was a landscape and portrait painter who studied at the École des Beaux-Arts under Jean-Léon Gérôme between 1872 and 1876. Stylistically, however, he was inspired by the Barbizon school aesthetic, having developed a close friendship with Jean-François Millet during several visits to Barbizon in the mid-1870s. Eaton settled in New York in January 1877, where he taught at the Cooper Union School of Design. Shortly before the founding of the Society of American Artists, he and a number of other artists had been rejected for associate membership at the National Academy. Shirlaw, who became the Society’s first president, began his career as

an engraver in Chicago and then trained in Munich from 1870 to 1877. There he adopted the dark palette and slashing brushwork of Munich-trained Americans, evident in *Sheep Shearing in the Bavarian Highlands* shown in the 1877 annual exhibition.¹³²

The Society's founding was based on a lack of sympathy for the policies and principles of the Academy, not as a result of the ire of one individual as insinuated by Gilder's charming, but apocryphal recollection of the circumstances. To Saint-Gaudens's son Homer, he wrote:

One day—just thirty years ago last Saturday, June 1st 1877,—he [Saint-Gaudens] rang the bell at the iron gate at 103 East Fifteenth street. It was the noon spell and I was home for lunch. I ran down to the gate, and I tell you there was a high wind blowing! You reverend father was as mad as hops! He declared that they had just thrown out a piece of sculpture of his from the Academy exhibit and he was ready to go into a new movement. I told him to come round that very evening.¹³³

Gilder's account is misconstrued, for as discussed earlier, the plaster sketch was rejected prior to the opening of Academy's annual on April 3, two months earlier.

In this first meeting several intentions were outlined: on the most general level, the new organization was formed “with the object of advancing the interests of Art in America, the same to be titled, ‘The American Art Association.’”¹³⁴ The American Art Association, renamed the Society of American Artists on February 21, 1878, encouraged not only diversity in the arts, but the individuality of the creator. To this end, the vehicle for promoting these goals would be an annual exhibition of painting and sculpture, the first to be held in early 1878. By advocating more liberal and less exclusive juries, as well as smaller, more harmonious installations, the new organization claimed not to be a rival of the National Academy, but an additional forum for the exhibition and sale of art. It likewise looked to embrace international aesthetic ideals, breaking free from the isolationistic shackles of a nativist mode of expression epitomized by the grand

transcriptional landscapes of the Hudson River School. The Society especially advocated the participation of previously marginalized groups: women, artists in other cities and abroad, and sculptors.

From the outset, the Society of American Artists was conceived along ideological rather than medium-based lines, an organization that was to be sensitive to the special concerns of sculptors and sculpture. Unable to alter the Academy's inhospitable stance on the exhibition and display of three-dimensional work, it was hoped that sculptors would be motivated to play a role in the Society's existence from the outset. Just days after its founding, Warner was elected to membership. The Society aimed to foster a sense of artistic community in which sculptors were equal players, the first such organization in this country in which they remained at the managerial epicenter and small-scale sculpture had a consistent exhibition forum. The particulars of the Society's founding and early years are well-documented,¹³⁵ and thus my assessment of this organization is weighted toward the impact it had on Saint-Gaudens's career and critical reputation and its role in the development of a new generation of sculptural talent, areas heretofore evaluated only in passing.

Contemporaneous correspondence between Saint-Gaudens and Helena and Richard Gilder indicates that they worked hand-in-hand in formulating the policies of the Society and publicizing espoused issues before its existence was officially announced in October 1877. It also includes discussions over the nature of the movement, particularly the extent of artist involvement and scope of membership. As meetings of the new organization were held, the Gilders updated Saint-Gaudens, informing him of new members and soliciting advice on its governance. In a letter written June 6, the day Saint-

Gaudens departed for Paris, Richard Gilder, as he put it, “sent [him] some ammunition in the way of newspaper notes covering the Academy. . . . It shows how widespread the feeling.” Among those specifically referenced were editorials from the *Evening Post* and the *Times*.¹³⁶ Ironically, despite their close allegiance, this letter makes clear that Saint-Gaudens had failed to tell the Gilders that he had married just days prior to departing for Europe.

The Society’s relationship to the Academy was of great concern to the founders who wished to avoid at least the outward appearance of fueling of aesthetic and generational conflicts. Gilder noted that some artists, including Louis Comfort Tiffany, offered support as long as “it is not run as an enemy of the Academy.”¹³⁷ Gilder defined the Society as “not to be an ‘opposition’ to the Academy but an independent movement of younger men; + it will sweep them all in.”¹³⁸ Thus by the time the founders publicly announced the Society’s existence in October, Charles de Kay explained in the *Times* that “the object of the association is to encourage art in general, not to hurt the Academy—to lend a helping hand to the younger men, not to offend the veterans of the guild.”¹³⁹ Admittedly, however friendly its outward intentions, the Society’s more cosmopolitan principles were antithetical to the traditionally aesthetics and exhibition policies encompassed in the crowded and stylistically disjointed displays of the Academy annuals.

Saint-Gaudens’s formative role in the Society had lasting implications for the professionalization of American sculpture, for he immediately began promoting the organization as an accessible and congenial domain for the medium (although it took several years to achieve). Referring to the Society as “the one great New York interest, outside of my work,”¹⁴⁰ Saint-Gaudens set a pattern of managerial commitment for

sculpture that lasted throughout the organization's history until it merged with the National Academy in 1906.¹⁴¹ He served as its vice president in 1877 and 1878, acting as a liaison between foreign-based artists and the Society's management while in Paris from 1877 to 1880. After returning from Paris, he was president in 1881, and among other roles, was a member of the committee on selection for exhibitions from 1883 to 1897, excepting 1884, 1885 (when there was no show), and 1894. His commitment to the Society was a principled belief that reached deeper than simply providing an exhibition forum to promote and establish one's reputation. To Saint-Gaudens, it represented a community of like-minded artists and writers, diverse in aesthetics, but unified in their commitment to furthering the status of the fine arts in this country, in effect to create a viable national art within an international sphere.

Notes to Chapter 2

¹ Homer Saint-Gaudens, ed., *The Reminiscences of Augustus Saint-Gaudens* (New York: Century Co., 1913), 1:154 (hereafter cited as *Reminiscences*).

² This apt term was used by Saint-Gaudens's son, Homer, as a title in Table of Contents, Chapter VI, *Reminiscences*.

³ Saint-Gaudens to Thomas J. Homer, 1 March 1874, Augustus Saint-Gaudens Papers, Dartmouth College Library, Hanover, N.H., microfilm reel 17, frame 429 (hereafter cited as Saint-Gaudens Papers, DCL). Homer Saint-Gaudens noted in the *Reminiscences* that Augusta's father "was unwilling that my mother and father be married until he has received at least one important commission" (1:166).

⁴ Louise Hall Tharp, *Saint-Gaudens and the Gilded Era* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1969), 75, 78.

⁵ In writing from Rome to ask permission to become engaged, Augusta Homer acknowledged and attempted to smooth over this deficit. She also revealed the sculptor's self-consciousness about his upbringing: "Mr. Saint-Gaudens' education in everything pertaining to art is complete. He occasionally makes mistakes in speaking. . . . His history is much like that of any other self-made man who has worked his way up in the world by his own determination, talent and manliness. . . . He ranks very high here, is courted in every way but with it all is an unaffected and with as little conceit as a man could be. He says he is not at all accustomed to society but I never saw him make a mistake for his kindness of heart would prevent that. . . . There is surely nothing against Mr. Saint-Gaudens except the social position of his parents and if they are good honest people who brought up their son to be what he is, that ought to be no objection. . . . Mr. Saint-Gaudens' talent is universally acknowledged and there is no doubt in his mind or that of all who know him that he must succeed." Homer to Thomas J. Homer, [ca. 1874], Saint-Gaudens Papers, DCL, quoted in Tharp, *Saint-Gaudens and the Gilded Era*, 85.

⁶ *Reminiscences*, 1:38.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 1:49.

⁸ Among Bernard Saint-Gaudens's clients were "the names of most of the principal families in New York, Governor Morgan, General Dix, some of the Astors, Belmonts, and so on" (*Reminiscences*, 1:15-16).

⁹ Saint-Gaudens to Homer, 1 March 1874, Saint-Gaudens Papers, DCL, microfilm reel 17, frame 428.

¹⁰ Gibbs to Saint-Gaudens, [December 1874], Saint-Gaudens Papers, DCL, quoted in Tharp, *Saint-Gaudens and the Gilded Era*, 93. Interestingly, Gibbs had earlier cautioned

Saint-Gaudens against involvement in governmental commissions in which political rather than aesthetic interests were determinant in the selection of an artist.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² On Gibbs, see Henry J. Duffy, "American Collectors and the Patronage of Augustus Saint-Gaudens," in *Augustus Saint-Gaudens, 1848-1907: A Master of American Sculpture*, exh. cat. (Paris: Somogy Éditions d'Art, 1999), 51, 54. Saint-Gaudens was likely referring to the Gibbs family when he wrote his French friend Alfred Garnier: "I am making a lot of money and will be able to complete my statue. . . . I am beginning to get into relations with rich Americans and the cameos I make for them are extraordinarily well paid for." See Saint-Gaudens to Garnier, 21 March 1871, Saint-Gaudens Papers, DCL, microfilm reel 7, frames 150 (translation) and 151 (copy).

¹³ Elizabeth Milleker, Associate Curator, Greek and Roman Art, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, confirmed the identity of the portrait, June 2002.

¹⁴ On the Gibbs busts, see John H. Dryfhout, "A Portrait Bust of Belle Gibbs," *Houston Museum of Fine Arts Bulletin* 4 (summer 1973): 30-37.

¹⁵ *Reminiscences*, 1:113.

¹⁶ Gibbs to Saint-Gaudens, 2 April 1872, Saint-Gaudens Papers, DCL, microfilm reel 7, frame 307. Earlier that year, Gibbs had promised the artist: "I shall try very hard to get your 'Hiawatha' into Central Park at New York. I hope that you will work at it now without cessation." See Gibbs to Saint-Gaudens, 26 February 1872, Saint-Gaudens Papers, DCL, microfilm reel 7, frame 299.

¹⁷ A letter from Saint-Gaudens to Gibbs insinuates that Gibbs intended to put *Hiawatha* on display at the newly opened Metropolitan Museum of Art, a plan that the sculptor wrote that he "would desire a great deal." See Saint-Gaudens to Gibbs, May 1872, Saint-Gaudens Papers, DCL, microfilm reel 7, frame 303. The museum was then located in temporary quarters at the Cruger mansion at 128 West Fourteenth Street. Beginning in late 1873, European and American sculpture was installed in the building's entrance hall, with the majority of the objects on loan from private collectors.

¹⁸ Saint-Gaudens describes Morgan's visit to Rome and his decision to finance *Hiawatha's* translation to marble in *Reminiscences*, 1:133. The Morgan family was among the clientele of Saint-Gaudens's shoemaker father.

¹⁹ Margaret Bouton, "The Early Works of Augustus Saint-Gaudens" (Ph.D. diss., Radcliffe College, 1946), 129.

²⁰ Morgan's collection of European and American paintings and neoclassical marble sculptures included the work of Erastus Dow Palmer and William Henry Rinehart. See *Catalogue of the Collection of Paintings, Statuary, etc. Belonging to the Estate of the*

Late Hon. Edward D. Morgan (New York: Ortgies & Co., 1886). According to the catalogue (39-40), at the time of this sale in January 1886, *Hiawatha* and four works by Rinehart, Pasquale Romanelli, and Marshall Wood were on loan to the Metropolitan Museum of Art. Rinehart's *Rebecca* and Romanelli's *Faust and Marguerite* are included in the Metropolitan's catalogue, *Loan Collection of Paintings and Sculpture . . . November 1885 to April 1886* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1885), 5. *Hiawatha* and Wood's *Musidora* are not, suggesting that they may not have been on view.

²¹ *Reminiscences*, 1:180.

²² *American National Biography*, s.v. "Evarts, William Maxwell."

²³ *Reminiscences*, 1:129-30.

²⁴ On the bust, see John H. Dryfhout, *The Work of Augustus Saint-Gaudens* (Hanover, N.H.: University Press of New England, 1982), 74, no. 51; and Thayer Tolles, ed., *American Sculpture in The Metropolitan Museum of Art. Volume 1. A Catalogue of Works by Artists Born before 1865* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1999), 248. For the date of the bust's completion, see Saint-Gaudens to Evarts, 22 April 1874, Saint-Gaudens Papers, DCL, microfilm reel 6, frame 2.

²⁵ Saint-Gaudens to Augusta Homer, 17 March 1875, Saint-Gaudens Papers, DCL, microfilm reel 21, frame 156.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, frame 154.

²⁷ Maitland Armstrong, *Day Before Yesterday: Reminiscences of a Varied Life*, ed. Margaret Armstrong (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1920), 258. On Armstrong, see also Gail E. Husch, "David Maitland Armstrong," *Antiques* 126 (November 1984): 1175-85.

²⁸ Armstrong, *Day Before Yesterday*, 259.

²⁹ For further discussion and an illustration of the *Taney*, see Dryfhout, *The Work of Augustus Saint-Gaudens*, 80, no. 59.

³⁰ These efforts include relief medallions for the silver *William Cullen Bryant Vase* (1875; The Metropolitan Museum of Art) designed by James H. Whitehouse. See Dryfhout, *The Work of Augustus Saint-Gaudens*, 78, no. 57. For contemporary discussions of the vase, none of which specifically names Saint-Gaudens's contributions, see "The Bryant Testimonial Vase," *Art Journal* (New York) 1 (May 1875): 145-49; Samuel Osgood, "The Bryant Vase," *Harper's New Monthly Magazine* 53 (July 1876): 245-52; and "The Bryant Vase," *Aldine* 8, no. 9 (1876): 282. It was shown at the Philadelphia Centennial International Exhibition, where it was favorably compared to the great silver Helicon Vase by the metal sculptor Morel Ladeuil. The article in *Harper's* references Saint-

Gaudens indirectly, noting “the sculptor of the medallions of the Bryant vase was once a fellow-artist with Ladeuil” (251).

³¹ See *Reminiscences*, 1:160, 179. Saint-Gaudens gave lessons in drawing to the family of Dr. Agnew in Dobbs Ferry, New York, and in modeling to a Mrs. Swinburne, the latter for which he earned fifty dollars a month. She may be tentatively identified as Katherine Swinburne, born in Erie, New York, who exhibited a bronze portrait bust in the Paris Salon of 1878 and was living and studying in Paris with Mme. Leon Bertaux at the time. See Lois Marie Fink, *American Art at the Nineteenth-Century Paris Salons* (Washington, D.C.: National Museum of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, in association with Cambridge University Press, 1990), 395.

³² Tharp, *Saint-Gaudens and the Gilded Era*, 94.

³³ *Reminiscences*, 1:174.

³⁴ Saint-Gaudens to Woolsey, 22 April 1875, Woolsey Family Papers, Manuscripts and Archives, Sterling Library, Yale University, New Haven, Conn.

³⁵ Earl Marble, unannotated and undated clipping, *Boston Evening Post*, ca. 4 June 1875, Saint-Gaudens Papers, DCL, microfilm reel 35, frame 675. The *Sumner* sketch was detailed in the *Reminiscences* (1:174) as “about two and one-half feet high, represent[ing] Sumner in his senator’s chair, his head thrown back and a little to one side, one hand vigorously braced against an arm of the chair, as if he were about to rise and speak in earnest debate, the other hand holding a scroll.”

³⁶ Ball’s statue, which was unveiled in 1878 in the Public Garden, is illustrated in Walter Muir Whitehill, *Boston Statues* (Barre, Mass.: Barre Publishers, 1970), [36].

³⁷ *Reminiscences*, 1:174.

³⁸ Saint-Gaudens to Woolsey, 28 June 1875, Woolsey Family Papers, Sterling Library.

³⁹ Saint-Gaudens to Evarts, [1876] (copy), Saint-Gaudens Papers, DCL, microfilm reel 6, frames 10-11.

⁴⁰ On the awarding of the commission, see Glenn V. Sherwood, *Labor of Love: The Life and Art of Vinnie Ream* (Hygiene, Colo.: SunShine Press Publications, 1997), 235-37. The monument was dedicated on April 25, 1881, and located in Farragut Square. See also Dryfhout, *The Work of Augustus Saint-Gaudens*, 88.

⁴¹ On the *Farragut Monument*, see especially Lois Goldreich Marcus, “Studies in Nineteenth-Century American Sculpture: Augustus Saint-Gaudens (1848-1907)” (Ph.D. diss., City University of New York, 1979), 33-102; and Joyce Karen Schiller, “The

Artistic Collaboration of Augustus Saint-Gaudens and Stanford White" (Ph.D. diss., Washington University, Saint Louis, 1997), 62-166.

⁴² See, for instance, Saint-Gaudens to Augusta Homer, 8 December 1875, Saint-Gaudens Papers, DCL, microfilm reel 21, frames 157-59, in which he describes calling on Stoughton and his wife, Gibbs, and Evarts, all about gaining introduction to Farragut committee members. See also letters from Saint-Gaudens to Mrs. Thomas Homer describing his efforts to secure the *Farragut* commission, reprinted in *Reminiscences*, 1:167-70.

⁴³ Marcus, "Studies in Nineteenth-Century American Sculpture," 42.

⁴⁴ The committee members between 1879 and 1881 were Moses H. Grinnell, Rear Admiral S. H. Stringham, Benjamin H. Field, Commodore J. W. A. Nicholson, General John A. Dix, William J. Hoppin, General Irving McDowell, Edwin D. Morgan, General Lloyd Aspinwall, Samuel Welmore, General George W. Cullum, S. J. Macy, John J. Cisco, R. W. Howes, Charles H. Marshall, and James E. Montgomery. See Schiller, "The Artistic Collaboration of Augustus Saint-Gaudens and Stanford White," 63 n. 2.

⁴⁵ Saint-Gaudens to Mrs. Thomas J. Homer, 31 May 1876, Saint-Gaudens Papers, DCL, microfilm reel 17, frame 515.

⁴⁶ Saint-Gaudens to John J. Murphy, Secretary, National Arts Club, 21 April 1907 (copy), Saint-Gaudens Papers, DCL, microfilm reel 49, frame 745.

⁴⁷ Saint-Gaudens to Mrs. Thomas Homer, 31 May 1876, Saint-Gaudens Papers, DCL, microfilm reel 17, frame 515. See also Saint-Gaudens to Ward, 26 June 1876, quoted in *Reminiscences*, 1:171: "I believe my chances would be increased a great deal could I refer to you for an opinion in regard to my past work and my general ability. I know it's a very delicate request to make, still as you were kind enough to express your wish to say a good word for me, I would be very desirous to take advantage of your kind feeling."

⁴⁸ Ward to Saint-Gaudens, [summer 1876], quoted in *Reminiscences*, 1:171.

⁴⁹ Lewis I. Sharp, *John Quincy Adams Ward: Dean of American Sculpture, with a Catalogue Raisonné* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1985), 23, 58-59.

⁵⁰ Dryfhout, *The Work of Augustus Saint-Gaudens*, 27, 61, no. 29. Saint-Gaudens completed the semi-circular relief panel of a bulldog guarding safes in 1872-73 while he was in New York between his first and second Roman tenures. The building was demolished in 1930.

⁵¹ *Reminiscences*, 1:159.

⁵² "Reminiscences of an Idiot," Saint-Gaudens Papers, DCL, microfilm reel 36, frame 572. This draft of the sculptor's reminiscences, later heavily edited and supplemented by Homer Saint-Gaudens and other family and friends, was started in March 1906 and written through the summer.

⁵³ *Reminiscences*, 1:160.

⁵⁴ Armstrong took credit for introducing La Farge and Saint-Gaudens: "In 1877 [sic] I found that Mrs. Edward King of Newport thought of erecting a monument at Newport in memory of her husband, and it occurred to me that Saint-Gaudens and La Farge would be an excellent pair to execute the work, so I introduced my two friends to each other with this in view, and spoke of them to Mrs. King." Armstrong, *Day Before Yesterday*, 263.

⁵⁵ H. Barbara Weinberg discusses this issue in the context of the La Farge-Saint-Gaudens collaboration on the King family tomb in *The Decorative Work of John La Farge*, Ph.D. diss., Columbia University, 1972 (New York and London: Garland Publishing, 1977), 459-61: "In the absence of confirming documents, conclusions as to whether La Farge and Saint-Gaudens were acquainted by 1875, or whether they were later introduced to each other by Maitland Armstrong cannot be drawn."

⁵⁶ See *Reminiscences*, 1:161-62. Homer Saint-Gaudens mentioned among the several failed commissions a bas-relief of the late Joseph Ridgeway of Saint Louis; the seated statue of Charles Sumner for Boston, and a monument to Sergeant Jaspar for Fort Moultrie, South Carolina (1:173-74). Writing to Mrs. Thomas J. Homer on March 7, 1876, Saint-Gaudens revealed: "I have met with so much disappointment that I expect nothing." Saint-Gaudens Papers, DCL, microfilm reel 17, frame 488.

⁵⁷ See Weinberg, *The Decorative Work of John La Farge*, 461. Weinberg observes: "He may have accepted the unaccustomed role of painter only in the absence of attractive commissions for sculpture." Additionally, a personal factor was the convenient proximity of Trinity Church to Augusta Homer and her family in Roxbury, Massachusetts.

⁵⁸ James L. Yarnall, Director, La Farge Catalogue Raisonné, to Thayer Tolles, 13 October 1998, archival files, Department of American Paintings and Sculpture, The Metropolitan Museum of Art.

⁵⁹ *Reminiscences*, 1:161.

⁶⁰ The particulars of Saint-Gaudens's participation in both projects are extensively discussed in Weinberg, *The Decorative Work of John La Farge*, 146-67, 456-69.

⁶¹ Thomas Homer had to be called in to extract payment from La Farge on more than one occasion. See, for instance, Augusta Saint-Gaudens to Homer, [1878], Saint-Gaudens Papers, DCL, microfilm reel 17, frame 273. See also Tharp, *Saint-Gaudens and the Gilded Era*, 115.

⁶² Saint-Gaudens to Helena Gilder, [late 1877], Saint-Gaudens Papers, DCL, microfilm reel 7, frame 661. Saint-Gaudens was unusually forthcoming in his admiration for La Farge. For his autobiography, amended in the *Reminiscences*, he revealed: "There is no doubt that my intimacy with La Farge has been a spur to higher endeavor, equal to, if not greater than any other I received from outside sources" (*Reminiscences*, 1:161). Further, in an undated (ca. spring 1877) letter to La Farge, Saint-Gaudens wrote: "I feel that I owe more to you in an artistic sense than to any man I ever met. And, believe me, it is my greatest regret that by leaving the country I am to end a close artistic connection with you" (*Reminiscences*, 1:166).

⁶³ *Reminiscences*, 1:116.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 1:50, 139-40.

⁶⁵ Saint-Gaudens to Homer Saint-Gaudens, 5 October 1904, Saint-Gaudens Papers, DCL, quoted in Dryfhout, *The Work of Augustus Saint-Gaudens*, 67; and Saint-Gaudens to Charles G. Loring, 25 January 1881, Director's Correspondence, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C., microfilm reel 550, 577.

⁶⁶ *Catalogue of the Fiftieth Annual Exhibition of the National Academy of Design, 1875* (New York: E. Wells Sackett and Bro., 1875), 31, nos. 513, 515.

⁶⁷ Saint-Gaudens to Homer, 17 March 1875, Saint-Gaudens Papers, DCL, microfilm reel 21, frame 156.

⁶⁸ See Dryfhout, *The Work of Augustus Saint-Gaudens*, 69, no. 45; and *Reminiscences*, 1:130. Evarts also introduced the sculptor to fellow attorneys Edwards Pierrepont and Charles O'Connor who commissioned portrait busts and copies after antique sculpture.

⁶⁹ *Dictionary of American Biography*, s.v. "Stoughton, Edwin Wallace."

⁷⁰ "Art," *Atlantic Monthly* 34 (September 1874): 379. See also Lois Marie Fink and Joshua Taylor, *Academy: The Academic Tradition in American Art, An Exhibition Organized on the Occasion of the One Hundred and Fiftieth Anniversary of the National Academy of Design, 1825-1975*, exh. cat. (Washington, D.C.: National Collection of Fine Arts, 1975), 73-75; and Margaret C. Conrads, "'In the Midst of an Era of Revolution': The New York Art Press and the Annual Exhibitions at the National Academy of Design in the 1870s," in David Dearing, ed., *Rave Reviews: American Art and Its Critics, 1826-1925*, exh. cat. (New York: National Academy of Design, 2000), 96. Additionally, Saul E. Zalesch, "Competition and Conflict in the New York Art World, 1874-1879," *Winterthur Portfolio* 29 (summer/autumn 1994), 106-7, argues that the rejection of eight of nine works by La Farge was not motivated by aesthetics, but by the jurors' collective personal dislike of his "critical, reserved manner verging on haughtiness" (106). Zalesch

observes that La Farge submitted his sketchy paintings rather than more saleable ones, ignoring a directive to members from Academy president John Quincy Adams Ward.

⁷¹ "The Fine Arts. The National Academy of Design," *New York Times*, 15 March 1875, 10.

⁷² [Clarence Cook], "Fine Arts: National Academy of Design—Private View—Forty-ninth Annual Exhibition," *New York Daily Tribune*, 9 April 1874, 4. On the "new departure," a phrase in wide circulation by the 1877 Academy annual, see Conrads, "'In the Midst of an Era of Revolution,'" in Dearinger, ed., *Rave Reviews*, 104 n. 65.

⁷³ See, for instance, [Clarence Cook], "Fine Arts: The National Academy of Design—Fiftieth Annual Exhibition—Private View," *New York Daily Tribune*, 9 April 1875, 7. The article notes that in the case of sculpture, Truman Howe Bartlett's "vigorous, manly, and original" *Wounded Drummer Boy* (1874; Smithsonian American Art Museum, Washington, D.C.) was excluded because it had been on display in Tiffany's bronze room for a few weeks.

⁷⁴ *New York Daily Tribune*, 9 April 1875, 7.

⁷⁵ For instance, Susan Nichols Carter wrote in the *Evening Post*: "These pictures of the older artists who have worked so hard and tried so many experiments, and have loved their profession so many years, have a deeper interest to us and properly excite a respect which the pictures by beginners are unable to inspire." S. N. C[arter], "The Academy Exhibition. IV. Fancy Pictures," *New York Evening Post*, 8 May 1875, 1.

⁷⁶ Jennifer A. Martin Bienenstock, "The Formation and Early Years of the Society of American Artists: 1877-1884" (Ph.D. diss., City University of New York, 1983), 25.

⁷⁷ See George Gurney, "Olin Levi Warner: A Catalogue Raisonné of His Sculpture and Graphic Works" (Ph.D. diss., University of Delaware, 1978), 304-5, no. 16.

⁷⁸ "The National Academy of Design," *Art Journal* (New York) 1 (May 1875): 158.

⁷⁹ [Earl Shinn], "Fine Arts: Fiftieth Exhibition of the Academy of Design. IV," *Nation* 20 (20 May 1875): 352. On Shinn's authorship, see Margaret C. Conrads, "Winslow Homer and His Critics in the 1870s" (Ph.D. diss., City University of New York, 1999), 40. Philadelphia native Shinn studied in 1866-67 at the École des Beaux-Arts in the atelier of Jean-Léon Gérôme. Poor vision precluded a career as an artist, and instead he turned to writing art criticism, working first for the *Philadelphia Evening Bulletin* between 1868 and 1870. He moved to New York in 1870 and wrote for the *Nation* from 1870 to 1881, serving as the primary art critic between 1874 and 1879. Shinn, who often published under the pseudonym Edward Strahan, published his magisterial 3-volume *Art Treasures of America Being the Choicest Works of Art in the Public and Private Collections of North America* (Philadelphia: Gebbie and Barrie) between 1879 and 1883. See *American*

National Biography, s.v. "Shinn, Earl," and Conrads, "Winslow Homer and His Critics," 22, 481.

⁸⁰ The lack of participation of senior sculptors at the Academy annuals was an ongoing bone of contention. For instance, in 1882: "Does Mr. J. Q. A. Ward ever exhibit the work he is turning out in profusion from his marble-yard? And where is his master, H. K. Brown?" See "The Fine Arts: National Academy. Fifty-seventh Exhibition," *Critic* 2 (8 April 1882): 104.

⁸¹ [Shinn], *Nation* 20 (20 May 1875): 352.

⁸² "Fine Arts: A Glimpse of Pictures at the Academy of Design. (Second Article)," *New York Daily Graphic*, 16 April 1875, 347.

⁸³ Anne Brewster, "Italy: . . . St. Gaudens of Paris," *Boston Daily Advertiser*, 29 September 1874, 2. Brewster was a writer and teacher from Philadelphia who shared an apartment with the American sculptor Albert Harnisch on the Via Quattro Fontane and was actively involved in the expatriate artist community. Saint-Gaudens knew Brewster in Rome for he wrote of her calling at his studio (perhaps in preparation for her article) and she too wrote of visiting there. At his studio she saw his study of a female Roman slave placing the young Emperor Augustus on a pedestal and crowning him with laurel, a composition, according to Saint-Gaudens, she deemed "one of the finest things she has seen in sculpture." See Saint-Gaudens to Florence Gibbs, 25 October 1874, Saint-Gaudens Papers, DCL, microfilm reel 7, frame 287. Presumably Brewster's article is the one that Saint-Gaudens refers to his autumn 1874 letter to Florence Gibbs as "a very flattering notice of me," one which he indicated Augusta Homer would send to her. See *Reminiscences*, 1:148. See also Tharp, *Saint-Gaudens and the Gilded Era*, 92: "Gussie [Augusta Homer] promptly sent [it] to all her friends and relations."

⁸⁴ Brewster, "Italy: . . . St. Gaudens of Paris," 2.

⁸⁵ "The Arts," *Appleton's Journal* 14 (2 October 1875): 441. The article states that the bust had just arrived in Boston from Rome. It is unknown whether this was the marble previously on view in New York or a plaster version.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

⁸⁷ Carter (d. 1896) served as *Appleton's* general art critic from 1874. She also was head of the Woman's Art School of the Cooper Union Institute (1873-1896) and a painter who had studied with William Morris Hunt and R. Swain Gifford. Although never among Saint-Gaudens's inner circle of devotés, Carter consistently praised his work, especially later in the pages of the New York edition of the *Art Journal*, published by D. Appleton. She and Helena de Kay Gilder were among the ten members of the first life class for women at the National Academy of Design in 1871-72. See Enrollment Register of the National Academy of Design, New York. On Carter, see also Conrads, "Winslow Homer

and His Critics," 43-44, 54-55, 474; and "The Fine Arts. Mrs. Susan N. Carter" (obituary), *Critic* 26 (15 August 1896): 110.

⁸⁸ Robert W. Rydell, *All the World's a Fair: Visions of Empire at American International Expositions, 1876-1916* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984), 10.

⁸⁹ John W. Forney, *A Centennial Commissioner in Europe, 1874-76* (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott and Co., 1876), 116.

⁹⁰ Saint-Gaudens to Florence Gibbs, 25 October 1874, Saint-Gaudens Papers, DCL, microfilm reel 7, frame 287.

⁹¹ *Official Catalogue, International Exhibition, 1876, Part II. Art Gallery, Annexes, and Outdoor Works of Art*, 9th and rev. ed. (Philadelphia: Centennial Catalogue Company, 1876), 51, no. 1216.

⁹² Saint-Gaudens to Augusta Homer, 11 May 1875 (typescript copy), Saint-Gaudens Papers, DCL, microfilm reel 21, frame 161.

⁹³ Conversely Kathryn Greenthal asserts in *Augustus Saint-Gaudens: Master Sculptor*, exh. cat. (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1985), 74, that the bust was "widely admired" at the Centennial, but she offers no published supporting evidence.

⁹⁴ For an illustrated descriptive overview, see Edward Strahan [Earl Shinn], *The Masterpieces of the Centennial International Exhibition Illustrated, Volume 1, Fine Art* (Philadelphia: Gebbie and Barrie, 1877).

⁹⁵ On Roberts, see Susan James-Gadzinski and Mary Mullen Cunningham, *American Sculpture in the Museum of American Art of the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts* (Philadelphia: Museum of American Art of the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, in association with the University of Washington Press, Seattle and London, 1997), 87-89; and David Sellin, "The First Pose: Howard Roberts, Thomas Eakins, and a Century of Philadelphia Nudes," *Bulletin, Philadelphia Museum of Art* 70 (spring 1975): 5-56; reprinted with additions as *The First Pose, 1876: Turning Point in American Art; Howard Roberts, Thomas Eakins, and a Century of Philadelphia Nudes* (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 1976).

⁹⁶ Brown to Lydia L. Brown (his wife), 5 April 1876, Henry Kirke Bush-Brown Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C., 8:221B.

⁹⁷ John F. Weir, "Painting and Sculpture at the Centennial. VI. The United States," *American Architect and Building News* 3 (6 April 1878): 122.

⁹⁸ "Topics of the Time: American Art," *Scribner's Monthly* 13 (November 1876): 127.

⁹⁹ See, for instance, Lorado Taft, *The History of American Sculpture* (New York: Macmillan Company, 1903), 8: "With the Centennial Exposition of 1876 came an artistic quickening such as our country never had known before."

¹⁰⁰ Greenthal, *Augustus Saint-Gaudens*, 75.

¹⁰¹ See, for instance, Armstrong, *Day Before Yesterday*, 260, which states: "The Masons, knowing little of art, didn't like it and were prevailed upon to accept it. . . ." For his part, Saint-Gaudens at the time wrote: "Had I had my own way completely I would have made an entirely different thing." Saint-Gaudens to Montgomery Gibbs, 5 July 1876, Saint-Gaudens Papers, DCL, microfilm reel 7, frame 366.

¹⁰² "The Statue of Silence," *New York Times*, 16 May 1876, 8.

¹⁰³ *Reminiscences*, 1:164. Earlier in the *Reminiscences*, Saint-Gaudens mockingly wrote of such sketches completed in Rome between late 1873 and early 1875 as "the studies of statues with which I was to embellish the world" (1:134).

¹⁰⁴ On the principles of the sketch in relation to French academic practices, see Albert Boime, *The Academy and French Painting in the Nineteenth Century* (London: Phaidon, 1971), esp. 79-184. For the sketch as especially related to American landscape painting, see Eleanor Jones Harvey, *The Painted Sketch: American Impressions from Nature, 1830-1880*, exh. cat. (Dallas, Tex.: Dallas Museum of Art, 1998).

¹⁰⁵ Saint-Gaudens to Augusta Homer, 17 March 1875, Saint-Gaudens Papers, DCL, microfilm reel 21, frame 155.

¹⁰⁶ See C[larance] C[ook], "The National Academy: Its Plans and Purposes Wrong," *New York Daily Tribune*, 19 May 1877, 3. Bienenstock in "The Formation and Early Years of the Society of American Artists," 62 n. 61, states that she was unable to document Cook's assertion that Saint-Gaudens had been personally requested to submit the sketch.

¹⁰⁷ McEntee diary entry, 31 March 1877, Jervis McEntee Papers, Archives of American Art, microfilm reel D180, frame 165.

¹⁰⁸ Minute Book of the National Academy of Design, 20 April 1877, National Academy of Design, New York.

¹⁰⁹ "American Art: The Academy of Design," *New York Times*, 8 April 1877, 4.

¹¹⁰ [Clarence Cook], "National Academy of Design: The Annual Exhibition," *New York Daily Tribune*, 3 April 1877, 4.

¹¹¹ [Cook], *New York Daily Tribune*, 19 May 1877, 3.

¹¹² National Academy of Design, *Illustrated Catalogue of the Fifty-second Annual Exhibition, 1877* (New York: E. Wells Sackett and Bro., 1877), 46, 54, 60, 62.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, 59.

¹¹⁴ "The Academy Exhibition: The Fifty-second Annual Exhibition," *New York Evening Post*, 2 April 1877, 4.

¹¹⁵ Hartley and Saint-Gaudens together completed a marble bust of Swedish-born inventor Captain John Ericsson (1873-74; National Portrait Gallery, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.). See Dryfhout, *The Work of Augustus Saint-Gaudens*, 67, no. 42. Palmer and Saint-Gaudens were acquaintances in Rome and also had adjoining studios in the German Savings Bank Building. See *Reminiscences*, 1:158-59, and Tharp, *Saint-Gaudens and the Gilded Era*, 100. During this period Saint-Gaudens gave modeling lessons to earn income, but the extent, if any, of a student-teacher relationship between Palmer and Saint-Gaudens is not known.

¹¹⁶ [Richard Watson Gilder], "Culture and Progress: The National Academy Exhibition, 1877," *Scribner's Monthly* 14 (June 1877): 264. The "Culture and Progress" section of the magazine was written by *Scribner's* editors.

¹¹⁷ "Academy Exhibition Portraits," *New York Times*, 23 April 1877, 4.

¹¹⁸ "The Academy of Design: Portraits in the Fifty-second Annual Exhibition," *New York Evening Post*, 5 May 1877, 1. South Carolina-born George William Sheldon graduated from Princeton in 1863 (B.A.) and 1866 (M.A.) and then taught at Princeton and at Union Theological Seminary until 1873. He wrote for the *Post* from 1873 through at least 1879, and also authored articles for *Harper's New Monthly Magazine* and the *Art Journal*. From 1890 to 1900 he was a literary advisor for D. Appleton & Co., London. Despite his apparent dislike of Saint-Gaudens's sketchy style, Sheldon, an aficionado of technical excellence, was firmly positioned in the camp of the younger cosmopolitan artists. He seems to have had no specific personal or professional relationship with Saint-Gaudens. He was, however, close with many artists, especially George Inness, and these friendships provided fodder for his writings, including *American Painters* (1879); *Hours with Art and Artists* (1882); and *Recent Ideals in American Art* (1888). Linda Jones Docherty observes that Sheldon was "more a reporter of the views of others than a man of strong individual opinions." See obituary, *New York Times*, 30 January 1914, 9; Conrads, "Winslow Homer and His Critics," 480-81; and Docherty, "A Search for Identity: American Art Criticism and the Concept of the 'Native School,' 1876-1893" (Ph.D. diss., University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 1985), 213.

¹¹⁹ [Clarence Cook], "Academy of Design. V.," *New York Daily Tribune*, 28 April 1877, 7.

¹²⁰ [Clarence Cook], "Academy of Design. VI.," *New York Daily Tribune*, 5 May 1877, 7.

¹²¹ *New York Daily Tribune*, 19 May 1877, 3.

¹²² See William O'Donovan, "National Academy Criticism," *New York Daily Tribune*, 2 June 1877, 4; C[larence] C[ook], "American Art: Why There Should Be a New Academy," *New York Daily Tribune*, 5 June 1877, 5; and "Letters from the People: Mr. Dolph as an Associate," *New York Daily Tribune*, 12 June 1877, 5. On Dolph's controversial election to associate, see Zalesch, "Competition and Conflict in the New York Art World," 112-13.

¹²³ "Academy Criticism. Comments on 'C.C.'s' Letters Answered," *New York Daily Tribune*, 9 June 1877, 4. O'Donovan responded in a letter printed on June 16, 1877 (4).

¹²⁴ C[larence] C[ook], "The Academy and Art. Progress in Art Impeded," *New York Daily Tribune*, 27 June 1877, 6. A clipping of this article is preserved in the Saint-Gaudens Papers, DCL, microfilm reel 35, frame 402.

¹²⁵ Gilder to Saint-Gaudens, 15 June 1877, Saint-Gaudens Papers, DCL, microfilm reel 7, frame 403. Saint-Gaudens was en route to Paris when this letter was written.

¹²⁶ *Reminiscences*, 1:164. The plaster was destroyed in 1904 in a fire at Saint-Gaudens's Cornish, New Hampshire, studio.

¹²⁷ Gilder journal, April 6, [1875], Richard Watson and Helena de Kay Gilder Papers, Archives of American Art, microfilm reel 285, frame 51.

¹²⁸ It is worth noting the common background of this group of sixteen participants, with the exception of Ryder. See Zalesch, "Competition and Conflict in the New York Art World," 109: "Although most artists then came from modest backgrounds, fifteen of the sixteen artists in the exhibition belonged to old, educated, and moneyed elite families of New York and Massachusetts."

¹²⁹ [Richard Watson Gilder], "Culture and Progress: Some Other Pictures," *Scribner's Monthly* 10 (June 1875): 253.

¹³⁰ Will H. Low, *A Painter's Progress* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1910), 203.

¹³¹ See George Sheldon, "A Word to the Artists. A Remedy Suggested for the Hanging Committee's Difficulties," *New York Evening Post*, 27 April 1877, 2; and de Kay, "Art or Business?" *New York Times*, 6 May 1877, 6. See also Bienenstock, "The Formation and Early Years of the Society of American Artists," 29-30.

¹³² On Eaton, see *American National Biography*, s.v. "Eaton, Wyatt"; and Laura L. Meixner, *An International Episode: Millet, Monet and Their North American Counterparts*, exh. cat. (Memphis, Tenn.: Dixon Gallery and Gardens, 1982), passim. On

Shirlaw, see Natalie Spassky, *American Paintings in The Metropolitan Museum of Art*, vol. 2 (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1985), 529-30.

¹³³ Gilder to Homer Saint-Gaudens, 6 June 1907, Saint-Gaudens Papers, DCL, microfilm reel 24, frame 284.

¹³⁴ Minutes of the Society of American Artists, 1 June 1877, National Academy of Design, New York.

¹³⁵ See Bienenstock, "The Formation and Early Years of the Society of American Artists," and Trudie A. Grace, "The National Academy of Design and the Society of American Artists: Rivals Viewed by Critics, 1878-1906," in Dearing, ed., *Rave Reviews*, 107-21.

¹³⁶ Gilder to Saint-Gaudens, 6 June 1877, Saint-Gaudens Papers, DCL, microfilm reel 7, frames 404, 406. Of the *Post* editorial, Gilder noted, "We haven't an idea as to its author—but it shows how widespread the feeling." One may hypothesize that the article was written by *Post* art critic George Sheldon and may be identified as "A New Academy," *New York Evening Post*, 5 June 1877, 2. The *Times* article presumably was written by Gilder's brother-in-law Charles de Kay.

¹³⁷ Gilder to Saint-Gaudens, 6 June 1877, Saint-Gaudens Papers, DCL, microfilm reel 7, frames 405-6.

¹³⁸ Gilder to Saint-Gaudens, 15 June 1877, Saint-Gaudens Papers, DCL, microfilm reel 7, frame 409.

¹³⁹ "The American Art Association," *New York Times*, 30 October 1877, 4. This article was clipped for Saint-Gaudens by the Gilders and is in the Saint-Gaudens Papers, DCL, microfilm reel 13, frame 46.

¹⁴⁰ *Reminiscences*, 1:163.

¹⁴¹ Other sculptors who had a role in the Society's early administration were Warner, who served as vice-president in 1881-82 and on the exhibition committees in 1881 and 1886, and O'Donovan, who with William Merritt Chase, was appointed as a Society delegate when the organization sent a loan exhibition to the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts in 1879.

Chapter 3

A Changing of the Sculptural Guard: 1878-1880

After participating in the founding of the Society of American Artists on June 1, 1877, and marrying Augusta Homer three days later in Roxbury, Massachusetts, Saint-Gaudens sailed with his wife for Liverpool on June 6. Arriving in Paris just in time to see the annual Salon, he remained there until mid-1880, a halcyon period he later defined as “a marked turning-point in my life.”¹ Saint-Gaudens returned to Paris to undertake recent commissions, which collectively assured him ample sculptural work and a steadier income. These included a reredos for Saint Thomas Church in New York (1877) and the Edward King family tomb for Island Cemetery, in Newport, Rhode Island (1877-78), both in collaboration with John La Farge. Additionally, the board of trustees of Sailors’ Snug Harbor, Staten Island, commissioned a statue to honor their benefactor, Robert Richard Randall (1880-84), while Edwin Morgan ordered sculpture for a family tomb to be erected in marble in Cedar Hill Cemetery, in Hartford, Connecticut. The sculptor’s principal commission was, of course, the bronze *Admiral David Glasgow Farragut* for Madison Square Park (1877-80), and for that reason alone he justified relocating to Paris: “The great thing is to make a good work of my Farragut and when I reason, ‘where do I run less risk of making a bad statue’—France is the answer.”² In addition to Paris’s congenial working atmosphere and the proximity of artistic mentors, it also offered practical benefits, such as lower living costs, access to sculptural models and materials, and an unparalleled bronze casting industry.

With the establishment of a network of critical and professional support during his two years in New York and his involvement in the founding of the Society of American Artists, Saint-Gaudens had already become an unquestioned leader among the inner circle of new movement artists. During his three years in Paris, he managed to remain in the American critical consciousness, with home-based artists and writers writing about him at sporadic intervals during his absence. Certain editors and critics conscientiously nurtured his reputation in spite of the fact that he had not as of yet produced prestigious monumental work. Richard Watson Gilder remained the sculptor's staunchest partisan while Clarence Cook was loyal until he grew impatient with Saint-Gaudens's slow output. The sculptor's name also recurred frequently in the general New York press, which habitually labeled him a "young" New York sculptor of "rising talent." This ongoing notice was due in large part to his prominent role in the management of the Society of American Artists, his involvement in projects with La Farge, and his occasional participation in American exhibitions. Further, there was an anticipatory mood surrounding the forthcoming *Farragut Monument*, a sculpture that would legitimize the growing critical support of Saint-Gaudens as the leading exemplar of a new school of American sculptors.

Saint Thomas Church, New York, 1877-78

In Paris, Saint-Gaudens's immediate obligation was to complete polychrome alto-reliefs for the chancel of Saint Thomas Church, Richard Upjohn's neo-Gothic Episcopal church located at the northwest corner of Fifth Avenue and Fifty-third Street in New York (the

entire structure was destroyed by fire on August 8, 1905).³ Under the ministry of Dr. William F. Morgan, the chancel was to be decorated by La Farge using funds provided by parishioner Charles H. Housman in his mother's memory. Although the date of the project's initiation is not known,⁴ Saint-Gaudens was well aware of this commission prior to leaving New York for Paris. At Stanford White's behest, in spring 1877 La Farge requested that Saint-Gaudens model a reredos of kneeling angels to flank a central Latin cross set above the altar (fig. 16). Eight square panels of adoring angels separated by unadorned bands were placed on either side of the cross with a frieze of cherubs across the top. La Farge's large encaustic canvasses, *Christ Appearing to Mary Magdalene (Noli Me Tangere)* and *The Angel at the Tomb* were installed on the left chancel wall while *The Arrival of the Three Marys at the Tomb of Christ* was on the right. This innovative fusion of painting and sculpture comprised one decorative ensemble, its unifying iconography the subject of the Resurrection, a theme selected by Morgan.

Rather than working as an assistant in a *bottega* setting on the interior of Trinity Church, Saint-Gaudens, as a full-fledged sculptor, contributed a central element to the Saint Thomas interior. Still, Saint-Gaudens labored in La Farge's shadow, looking to the older artist for guidance and validation. Working with La Farge in the wake of his well-publicized critical success at Trinity Church took on additional cachet, for La Farge had advanced in reputation to the forefront of American artistic and cultural life, a position he maintained for the next thirty years. No longer classifiable as only an easel painter, post-Trinity La Farge was a force who had single-handedly redefined the relationship between American painting and the decorated environment as well as American painting and its sister arts. Although Saint-Gaudens received little financial compensation for his efforts,

his affiliation with La Farge on the program for Saint Thomas Church was seminal to his early success and the development of his public estimation, and this reality weighed heavily on the sculptor. The commission represented a significant departure from his displayed portrait busts as well as his neoclassicizing ideal marbles, *Hiawatha* and *Silence*, which were in essentially private spaces. Having received limited and passing comment for these sculptures, the Saint Thomas commission, carried out in a new style, held the potential to validate the sculptor's talent on a larger, public scale.⁵

Collaborating across the sea through a flurry of letters, sketches, and photographs had its share of difficulties, and resulted in tension between La Farge and Saint-Gaudens. While the sculptor was clearly on a learning curve, eager for La Farge's mentoring and approbation,⁶ he also wanted the work to reflect his unique artistic vision. That Saint-Gaudens felt his individual reputation hanging in limbo is revealed in his guarded and fretful remarks. Evidently he felt the reredos' hasty execution—completed in just six weeks—compromised his artistic standards. Once he cast the reliefs in cement composition material, he colored the sculptural ensemble with the assistance of Will H. Low, an Albany-born artist whose large painting *Reverie* (ca. 1877; unlocated) Saint-Gaudens admired when it hung on the line at the National Academy annual in 1877.⁷ Low had worked in Paris since 1873, studying with Jean-Léon Gérôme and Emile-Auguste Carolus-Duran, while also retreating to Barbizon under the tutelage of Jean-François Millet. After Millet's death in 1875, Low was among the first Americans to work in the nearby village of Grez-sur-Loing, which became a popular artists' colony. His involvement in the Saint Thomas project represented his first foray into decorative painting, an area in which he would subsequently specialize.

Saint-Gaudens offered warning to those who served as his most stringent critics. To La Farge he wrote on September 10: "I am very anxious to have you see the work, to know your opinion of it and to know how it agrees with yours. . . . [I] am anxious about the impression it will produce and particularly your criticism of the color."⁸ When shipping the ensemble to La Farge ten days later: "I make no pretense of it as a piece of sculpture, that would be ridiculous considering the time I had to do it. . . . Do not judge them [the panels] as they come out of the box, they are in some cases hideous, but wait till they are up and in proper position."⁹ The sculptor relayed a similar sentiment to Gilder when providing him photographs of the reliefs in an uncolored state. Reporting that he had also sent Cook a photograph along with an explanation of the sculptural program, he revealed insecurity: "I am anxious to know the impression the work produced and also to let him know in how short a time I made the work." Repeating himself, Saint-Gaudens continued: "I do not make any pretensions as to the sculpture of the work. . . . I wish to correct any impression of mediocrity they may have produced by showing the facts in the affair—I am well pleased with the whole and as a whole the work will be judged—with time something very fine could be done."¹⁰ He also suggested that Low, by then back in New York, offer further explanation about the sculptural program.

La Farge's written reaction to the sculptor's work, which Saint-Gaudens received in November, was equivocal. On the one hand, La Farge praised the reredos as "a living work of art," noting that "your bas-relief is thought by others as well as by myself to be a great success." On the other, he objected to Saint-Gaudens's changing the proportions of the angels, which he felt disturbed the harmony of the overall program of sculpture,

paintings, and stained glass. He particularly disliked the small band of angels' heads and criticized the "doorway look" of the panels, pointedly stating "it seems to me that you have some poor advisors." Moreover, La Farge was angered over the duration and complications of the installation. It had necessitated his cutting his own work, which he found "very disagreeable to my artistic feelings and to my personal feeling also. As I had given you the principal place, it was a bore also to have even my place injured."¹¹ Saint-Gaudens's lengthy response addressed each criticism in turn while laying some blame on issues of communication. He remained respectfully deferential. For instance, he wrote: "You are the last artist whose feelings, both personal and artistic, I would wish in any way to hurt."¹² Later, having mellowed over time and with the benefit of historical hindsight, La Farge characterized this collaboration with Saint-Gaudens as "a sort of labor of love for us and we were very glad to put in our time and money to help in the new movement of decorating religious buildings in an artistic way."¹³

In contrast to La Farge's reserve, Gilder and his select circle of artists and literati were quick to praise Saint-Gaudens's latest and most public effort. Wyatt Eaton, secretary for the Society of American Artists, reported that "two things are talked of in N.Y. at present—The A.A.A. [American Artists' Association, renamed the Society of American Artists] and the decorations of St. Thom^s' Church. . . . The work is complete and all that could be desired—without any sense of a lack of detail. . . . I feel that your figures have the purity and sincerity of the early Italians and the force and effect of the later and modern art."¹⁴ Unquestionably he was referring to conversations among younger artists of the Gilder circle and affiliated critics and patrons, as the sculptor's reputation had not yet expanded much beyond this limited group. This supposition may

be affirmed in a subsequent letter from Eaton to Saint Gaudens: “We keep up our art excitement in our little circle which revolves around the little studio in 15th St. S^t Gaudens always the main topic.”¹⁵ Helena de Kay Gilder wrote the sculptor in November:

We are all ébahi [dumbfounded] at your energy. To think of your doing that beautiful relief & half a dozen little things since we saw you! You have had unqualified praise from all sources the old as well as the new spirits. Really there is in your angels something religious which we never see in modern churches. It is more like the Early Italians, & their religiousness is so pure—so spiritual, so unsentimental. . . . I say we because Mr. Gilder, my brother [Charles de Kay], Mr. Eaton & I all feel the same way. . . . Mr. Gilder says to tell you that he feels that it is less necessary for him to go to Europe that you have brought something of high art home to us.¹⁶

De Kay’s assimilation of Saint-Gaudens’s work into the early Renaissance ideal was both perceptive and significant. It acknowledged the redirection of American ecclesiastical decoration as well as the theological appropriateness of linking the early Renaissance with the relatively simple strictures of Protestant worship.¹⁷ In August 1877 La Farge had instructed the sculptor to draw on art of the early Renaissance for his inspiration, and the sculptor responded by studying paintings at the Louvre.¹⁸ This directive was calculated, for La Farge was restricted by Saint Thomas’s awkward pentagonal apse and responded by creating a setting similar to an early Renaissance altarpiece.¹⁹ His aesthetic concerns for a unified scheme as well as his enthusiasm for the decorative potential of the early Renaissance style by necessity became Saint-Gaudens’s as well. Through a reconstitution of past sources into a new formal language, La Farge and Saint-Gaudens promulgated in Saint Thomas the fluid dynamic of tradition and innovation that would become the overall guiding leit-motif of the American Renaissance.

Press notices assessing Saint Thomas Church ran over a period of months, from the initial placement of the chancel decorations during autumn 1877 to the installation of La Farge's final mural the following April. Saint-Gaudens was kept abreast of critical reaction through clippings sent to him by the Gilders. On October 31, 1877, the *Times* ran a lengthy article on the partially installed chancel decorations. Although focusing primarily on the awkward interior space and La Farge's large mural canvasses, the writer, presumably de Kay, devoted considerable space to Saint-Gaudens, who was here characterized, as he frequently was in the late 1870s, as a "young New-Yorker." The author noted that the alto-relief angels, each individualized, were modeled "from sketches by La Farge. . . . Saint-Gaudens has followed the original drafts, but to all of them he has given great beauty, both of figure and expression, so that they reflect the highest credit on the young sculptor. In fact the post of honor is given to this composition in clay."²⁰

Following a similar course, an article in the *World* (reprinted in the *American Architect and Building News*) noted: "The general design is Mr. La Farge's, of course, and is extremely poetical. Whether it is intended to symbolize any specific sentiment we do not know." The author praised Saint-Gaudens: "We have no sculptor of more delicate feeling or more refined sense of movement and grace." However, he erroneously attributed the painting of the reliefs entirely to Low and criticized the color scheme as "somewhat pale and gray."²¹

If one may judge from Saint-Gaudens's subsequent comments to Gilder, the sculptor was particularly upset about articles inferring that he was wholly dependent on La Farge for artistic direction. He wrote him to "correct what is wrong":

The impression is given in all that I was merely a kind of smart modeler who

carried out the work faithfully and handsomely from Mr. La Farge's designs. The idea of placing angels in sculpture around the cross is Mr. La Farge's—I think it [a] very fine one and to me was entrusted the carrying out of the idea with no other design from him but a sketch not six inches in size. . . . I should have been very glad could I have had Mr. La Farge's excellent taste and criticism . . . but there was no time for it. I had to do the whole as I think I told you in my last in six weeks and in consequence as I had to sacrifice something, I sacrificed the mere modeling etc. of the individual angels to the general character of the whole.

He continued: "What worries me in the articles you sent is that I am given no credit for that which was my principal 'souci,' the general composition feeling and sentiment of the work as a whole. . . . Another mistake has been in attributing the entire painting to Mr. Low, he was simply my assistant, whatever he did was under my direction. . . . I painted a great part of it myself."²² Evident is Saint-Gaudens's determination to elevate himself to the status of an independent multi-dimensional creative talent, rather than an apprentice working as an uninspired copyist or a derivative artist reliant on the directives of others.

In a gesture that underscores not only Gilder's belief in Saint-Gaudens's skill but also his power to promote, publicize, and not insignificantly—to rectify, Gilder requested that the well-known engraver Timothy Cole produce an engraving of the Saint Thomas reredos (fig. 17).²³ Gilder also commissioned Cook to write a feature article for *Scribner's Monthly* in which the engraving was to be published and Saint-Gaudens's contribution endorsed. The article appeared in the February 1878 issue under the title "Recent Church Decoration."²⁴ Cook equated the current movement in ecclesiastical decoration to a similar development in fifteenth-century Florence and concluded that Florentines were likely as unaware of the artistic revolution going on about them as Americans were of their own progress "to-day" in setting the art of painting "at tasks worthy of her." Cook recognized that in the decoration of Trinity and Saint Thomas churches, "an artist [La Farge] has been called on for the highest service art can render

and his assistants in the work have also been artists.”²⁵ With frequent references to the churches of Renaissance Italy, Cook traced the history of church decoration in the United States, devoting most of his discussion to Trinity. In speaking of Saint Thomas, Cook criticized the difficulty of working in the polygonal chancel and devoted some equivocal discussion to La Farge’s murals, conceding that the overall effect would be difficult to analyze until the vacant spot on the right side was filled by the remaining mural.

Cook discussed Saint-Gaudens and his work at length. Although something of a propagandistic exercise on Gilder’s behalf, and by extension, Saint-Gaudens’s, Cook was too principled to praise that which he did not esteem. After describing what he called the “Adoration of the Cross by Angels,” Cook not incorrectly characterized Saint-Gaudens as a “young” artist still in the midst of a seminal rite of passage from the private to public eye:

Mr. St. Gaudens comes for the first time before our public as a sculptor in this work, in which he expresses himself and his own aims, however slight and sketchy may be reckoned the execution of his work. It is not his work in the immediate conception; but the essential part, the whole spirit, sentiment and detail are his and his alone. The charm of Mr. St. Gaudens’ work is not easy to express. It is, as near as our words can give tongue to our thinking, its harmonious interweaving of deep childlike religious fervor with a strong buoyant sense of delight in living and loving.

Cook then codified the symbolic lineage between the sculptor and his Italian Renaissance predecessors (rather than his American ones), while sustaining his claim to artistic originality and stylistic modernity, and therefore progress:

It is true that the young sculptor’s work suggests the early Italian sculpture, but only as one spring-time suggests another. There is no slavish imitation, nor anything out of date or out of time. Art can never deny her lineage, and Mr. St. Gaudens’ art is a shoot from a stock full of health and vigorous life, and strong enough to engraft a new branch upon with the hope of happy fruit. What we especially welcome in this work of his, is the very fact that we have in it a return to a time and the models about which we in America know less than nothing—the

art of the early Italian Renaissance—with which nothing since the Greeks can compare, and which is peculiarly suited to the feeling of our own day in its mixture of intellectual penetration with deep religious feeling.²⁶

Although Saint-Gaudens was disappointed by the general tenor of many of the Saint Thomas reviews, not surprisingly Cook's writing pleased him. In a March 1878 letter to Stanford White, he remarked, "Cook has been very kind to me in his article."²⁷

After the chancel decorations were fully in place in April 1878, the *Times* published a lengthy article on Saint Thomas's decorative program. The tenor of the writing suggests that de Kay authored it. Telling is his description of the angels by the "young sculptor St. Gaudens . . . after a hasty sketch by La Farge." In generously qualifying the sketch as "hasty," it is tempting to presume that something of Saint-Gaudens's diatribe to Gilder had been filtered to de Kay as well as to Cook. De Kay likened the ensemble to a shrine or reliquary, imagining that La Farge's panels folded in upon themselves, and again across the central angels and cross much as La Farge himself had in imitating the effect of an early Renaissance altarpiece. Saint-Gaudens's angels, de Kay felt, "are thoroughly in the spirit of such a religious decoration. They might have been conceived, although not executed, in Florence, during the ages when Florence was still full of the traditions of the great sculptors. It is doubtful if the Florence of the present day can produce anything better, even if as good."²⁸ Although less charitable toward La Farge's paintings, de Kay cited the "*tout ensemble*" as immutable evidence that interiors should be decorated by artists not "upholsterers," and called for further such aesthetic projects with "staying power."²⁹

In retrospect, Saint Gaudens's work on Saint Thomas defined his artistic persona. It proclaimed his allegiance to the art of the Italian Renaissance as a springboard for

modern decorative interpretation in both his smaller reliefs and larger public commissions. It established a pattern that saw critics more often comparing Saint-Gaudens to Italian Renaissance masters than contemporary foreigners. With Saint Thomas, Saint-Gaudens was also recognized as a collaborative artist, a sculptor who worked not solely as an individual but as a team player, a role he would assume both in monumental and interior commissions, especially during the 1880s. Finally, from the critics' standpoint, it bought him the pedigree of inclusion in a distinguished artistic lineage. It pleased and reassured writers who were eager to proclaim American artistic prowess as symptomatic of larger cultural progress and looked to Saint-Gaudens as their sculptor paradigm.

American Activities in Europe, 1877-1880

During his three years in Europe, Saint-Gaudens was an active member of the American expatriate artistic community. His studio became a social locus, especially the large one he occupied after March 1878 at 49 rue Notre Dame des Champs, which formerly served as a dance hall and following that, a printing plant. Saint-Gaudens also frequented gatherings at Frank Millet's Montmartre studio. George de Forest Brush, William Gedney Bunce, J. Carroll Beckwith, Kenyon Cox, Edwin H. Blashfield, and John Singer Sargent were among his Parisian confreres of the late 1870s. In Paris Saint-Gaudens's organizational roles in the formation of the Society of American Artists and the selection of American paintings for the 1878 Exposition Universelle accorded him professional respect that could not yet be earned through the quality of his work alone.

Letters to and from Saint-Gaudens and the Gilders and Eaton attest to the sculptor's ongoing participation in the management of the Society of American Artists. Since one of the founding tenets of the Society was to give foreign-based artists a significant presence in the exhibitions, Saint-Gaudens was responsible for rallying American artists in Paris around the new organization and encouraging them to send their paintings to New York. It is interesting to note Saint-Gaudens's retrospective observations on his Paris-based involvement with the Society:

Together with . . . friends I engaged in the enthusiastic meetings incited by the bold and admirably written articles of Clarence Cook, attacking the conservatism of the Academy of Design,—articles which made a great commotion in the art circles of New York at that period. We voted endless resolutions and endorsements of what he said, after the usual discussions and schisms that occur when a lot of young men try to do something.³⁰

In June 1877, Richard Watson Gilder requested that Saint-Gaudens send from Paris a list of artists who potentially would contribute to the first exhibition. Soon thereafter, Helena de Kay Gilder asked the sculptor to “choose one or two persons to help you in getting names & works for the exhibition.”³¹ In early October 1877, after completing his reredos for Saint Thomas Church, Saint-Gaudens met with Americans working in Paris, reporting to Helena Gilder, that these artists, thirty-eight strong, wished to select among themselves a jury for their pictures. They “wanted an excellent and strong show and that in the acceptance or rejection of pictures absolutely no partiality was to be shown.” Saint-Gaudens advised that the organizers concur for it was “best to make the movement a large one.”³² A committee of artists—including Saint-Gaudens—was appointed to pass judgment on the works from the foreign-based artists, their approval in Paris guaranteeing their acceptance in New York. Ultimately Saint-Gaudens exercised little control over which paintings were selected for the Society's first

exhibition, but one-third of the gallery space was assigned to artists from Paris. He was forced to relinquish his spot on the jury of selection since he was based in Rome between January and March 1878 due to his wife's chronic ill health. There is some confusion as to the exact composition of the committee; either Charles Dubois or Blashfield took Saint-Gaudens's place.³³ Saint-Gaudens's involvement with the Society's affairs waned as he became increasingly immersed in his work on the *Farragut*, to the extent that in December 1879, he inquired of Gilder, who was also in Europe at the time: "By the way, have you heard anything about their movements?"³⁴

Yet Saint-Gaudens continued to involve himself in the promotion of new movement artists. Beginning in late March 1878, following his return from Rome, Saint-Gaudens assisted Maitland Armstrong on the jury of selection for American paintings at the 1878 Exposition Universelle, held from May 1 to October 28. Saint-Gaudens apparently accepted the responsibility because he was a good friend of Armstrong's and considered it an honor, although he later described the experience as "something like a battle."³⁵ The three-man jury of Armstrong, Saint-Gaudens, and Christian Edward Detmold, a writer and art collector, selected (with the input of a New York advisory committee) and installed oil paintings, watercolors, and drawings from Americans at home and in Paris.³⁶ Armstrong, commissioner of the American fine arts section, principally dictated the selection and exclusion of participants. The jury prejudiced its choices toward such younger, more technically innovative American artists as Sargent, Mary Cassatt, and Winslow Homer, although such old guard landscape painters as Sanford R. Gifford and Frederic Edwin Church were represented, though Church's work

was skied.³⁷ Other notables such as Jasper Cropsey and Albert Bierstadt, were not included.

During the selection process, Armstrong had instructed Saint-Gaudens, “I do not want any sculpture in the gallery.”³⁸ Presumably he was referring to large, aesthetically retardataire works by expatriate American neoclassicists who had dominated the Centennial Exhibition in Philadelphia two years earlier. Possibly for aesthetic reasons and definitely due to budgetary restrictions, sculpture was officially banned from the display, a missed opportunity for Americans attempting to establish esteem in Parisian art circles and a presence in the international market. As a result, Lucy H. Hooper, a Paris correspondent for the *Art Journal*, complained, “not a single statue or bust graces our exhibit not withstanding the renown that American sculpture has long enjoyed.”³⁹ Despite the exclusion of sculpture, three statuettes by Rome-based Montague Handley were displayed as were several genre pieces by Randolph Rogers. It should also be noted that a pair of silver candelabra with Native American figures designed by Saint-Gaudens was included in Tiffany & Co.’s silver display.⁴⁰

Despite Armstrong’s nearly exclusive control over the selection process, Saint-Gaudens later described his own role as “righter of wrongs.”⁴¹ On a personal level the sculptor’s power to influence the selection toward a new movement bias partially redressed the rejection of his plaster sketch at the National Academy of Design the previous year. On the other hand, he did nothing to forward the cause of American sculpture on an international stage despite the fact that this exposition was a prime opportunity to demonstrate American receptiveness to international artistic trends for both American painters and sculptors. Still, the committee’s action strengthened the

cause of the insurgent painters affiliated with the Society of American Artists and downplayed the contributions of the older generation, even while the selection of objects endured criticism in the American and French press for its apparent bias against quintessentially “national” subjects. An article in the *New York Times* addressed the salient concerns:

These young persons have struck terror to the heart of the American colony by judging pictures on the ground of artistic merit displayed in them. . . . Carried away by their mistaken enthusiasm for pure art, they have rejected pictures of great size, which show, almost as faithfully as a colored photograph, miles and miles of our unequalled Western landscape. . . . They have made the pitiable mistake of supposing the size of, and length of time occupied in the painting of, a picture, has little or nothing to do with its artistic merit.⁴²

This inclination toward the more cosmopolitan, internationally-trained artists would also manifest itself at home in the Society of American Artists’ inaugural exhibitions.

Society of American Artists and National Academy of Design, New York, 1878

The first exhibition of the Society of American Artists was held at the Kurtz Gallery from March 6 to 30, 1878. The organizers intentionally selected the dates so that the show opened prior to the annual exhibition of the National Academy of Design, a move guaranteed to attract attention from the press.⁴³ Unlike the crowded Academy annuals, the Society’s catalogue listed a modest 124 works.⁴⁴ The paintings, many completed in Europe and eclectic in their subjects, were hung according to tonal range, rather than theme, size, or personal politics. In fact, fairness of policy was a paramount objective of the organizers. In the place of honor was Munich-trained William Merritt Chase’s *Ready for the Ride* (1877; Union League Club, New York) with a dark Old Master-inspired

palette. As Jennifer Bienenstock has pointed out, this exhibition served to introduce the American public for the first time to uninhibited and subjective versions of new European-inspired styles and subject matter.⁴⁵ At the same time, the organizers promoted inclusiveness by including more technically restrained paintings and encouraging submissions from National Academicians. Other paintings were less deliberately finished than the customary National Academy aesthetics, reflecting prevailing French and German practices. In the main, however, they were complete and conservative enough to escape the journalistic reprimands that would plague works in the 1879 and 1880 Society exhibitions.

Critically, the 1878 exhibition may be deemed a success, although it must be remembered that Cook and Gilder, along with de Kay, were committed inner-circle propagandists for the new organization's reformist agenda and thus worked earnestly to set the prevailing critical tone. In his article "A New Art Departure," Cook praised the quality and freshness of purpose: "Here at last is painting for painting's sake; study for youth's delight in study . . . the look of the present exhibition must, I think, be exhilarating."⁴⁶ De Kay saw the exhibition as "containing the promises for the future of American art,"⁴⁷ and acknowledged the weighty potential of this transitional moment.

Despite the Society founders' objectives to give sculpture greater prominence and to encourage the future direction of American sculpture, their initial commitment, as manifested in the 1878 exhibition, was marginal. While great debate occurred over allocation of gallery space between native and foreign-based painters, little attention was paid to how sculpture would be incorporated into the overall installation. In November 1877, soon after leasing the Kurtz Gallery, Eaton wrote to Saint-Gaudens: "I say that our

arrangements are complete—but I am too hasty. We are negotiating with the Pallet [sic, Palette] Club for a room which communicates with the Kurtz gallery for the exhibition of sculpture. I should feel that we had accomplished but half our work if this was neglected.”⁴⁸ Writing a month later, Eaton spoke of schemes for incorporating the sculpture into the Kurtz Gallery space—the objects potentially occupying part of one wall, the center, or the corners of the room. His ambitions curtailed, Eaton then insinuated that in the months leading up to the show the organizers were frustrated by the lack of promising material: “The matter will probably be decided by the amount of good sculpture at our disposal—at present we know of but few desirable things.”⁴⁹ Ultimately, they must have opted to limit the number of sculpted pieces rather than to show inferior or stylistically incompatible work. The inaugural exhibition included only four sculptures, a mere three percent of the overall number of exhibited objects—three by Olin Levi Warner and one by the Philadelphia artist Howard Roberts, both of whom had trained at the *École des Beaux-Arts*.

By the time the Society exhibit opened, just two of twenty-two current members were sculptors, Saint-Gaudens and Warner.⁵⁰ This dearth of numbers may be explained in part by Saint-Gaudens’s removal to Paris immediately following the organization’s founding. No doubt his departure resulted in a loss of sculptural momentum. There, as mentioned earlier, he fostered the overall commitment of foreign-based artists to the Society, but in reality he did little to nurture its pledge to sculptors while abroad. Another contributing factor is that, aside from Saint-Gaudens, Warner, Roberts, and few others, there simply were not yet American sculptors trained in an academic manner sympathetic with the aesthetic principles advocated by the majority of Society members.

Saint-Gaudens's own lack of participation in the exhibition, while not intentional, also diminished the presence of sculpture at the Society. In November 1877 he mentioned to Gilder that he planned to display a bust of Farragut and "very probably" a bronze profile relief of Maitland Armstrong (fig. 18), the first in his series of bas-relief portraits completed as intimate tokens of friendship.⁵¹ Writing to White from Rome in March 1878, he inquired whether the architect had seen the bronze medallion of Armstrong that he "sent to the new Exhibition in New York." Additionally, he mentioned sending his *Farragut*, which must refer to a bust study for the monument.⁵² That Saint-Gaudens's sculptures did not arrive in time to be displayed in the short venue at the Kurtz Gallery is documented. Thanking Saint-Gaudens for his portrait, Armstrong regretted that it had not arrived in time for the exhibition.⁵³

On March 23, the ever-perceptive Cook commented on a curious lack of commitment on the part of the founders in displaying their own works at the exhibition, "as if they wished the society ill instead of well." He observed that either these artists sent old work, such as La Farge or Walter Shirlaw or "mere sketches" as in the case of J. Alden Weir. Thus, Cook found the weight of the exhibition rested with paintings by Munich-trained Chase and Paris-trained and Boston-based William Morris Hunt, neither of whom were in the inner organizational circle, although they were closely allied with its members personally and aesthetically. Of Saint-Gaudens, Cook was especially critical, even in the wake of his abundant praise of Saint Thomas Church in the *Scribner's Monthly* article. He observed: "Either they have sent nothing at all, like Mr. St. Gaudens, who worked religiously to give the enterprise a good send-off, and who, being a sculptor, is only represented here by the pictures he persuaded other people to send . . . [not] by the

sculptures of his own which have not yet arrived, but are knocking about somewhere on the Atlantic Ocean.”⁵⁴ Evident are the early fissures of Cook’s ideological commitment to the organization of the Society despite Gilder’s ongoing attempts to mollify him. Cook had become increasingly alienated from the Gilder circle after the Society elected John Henry Dolph, a painter of sentimental animal subjects, in 1878. Dolph had been elected to the Academy the previous year and the critic believed his work was of questionable quality.⁵⁵

Despite a proliferation of articles on the Society’s first exhibition, critical notice of the sculpture was predictably scant. Nonetheless, it is telling. The writing reflects no consensus in judgment as to the merit of the most unusual of the four sculptures, Roberts’s forty-inch-high marble statuette, *Lot’s Wife Turning to Salt* (fig. 19), priced at \$1500. The *Herald* found *Lot’s Wife* “a fine idea, admirably carried out. . . . The process of crystallization going on has rooted her to the ground, and all over, she, while writhing, is slowly turning into the many-sided crystals.”⁵⁶ Roberts’s close associate Earl Shinn praised it as “a nightmare theme treated with perfect self-command, originality, and knowledge.”⁵⁷ Other reviews were far less charitable. Scathing words were penned by de Kay, writing in the *Times* that *Lot’s Wife* “goes further beyond the limits of art than anything shown here in paint. . . . It is very coarse art, indeed, from which the sooner Mr. Roberts frees himself the better.”⁵⁸ Clearly, in speaking of exceeding the “limits of art,” de Kay was referencing the controversial sketchy paintings by the likes of J. Frank Currier that had initiated an ongoing critical debate; not coincidentally the subject of most of de Kay’s review was dedicated to the conflict-ridden issue of finish. Although the medium and the choice of a Biblical theme hearkened to the waning neoclassical

aesthetic, the peculiar work, with its active, angular form was a clear departure from the traditional smooth and polished surfaces. In *Lot's Wife*, Roberts produced a fundamentally transitional piece, stylistically incompatible with the pure tenets of either the neoclassical or Beaux-Arts styles.

Further undermining the Society's professed commitment to sculpture was the fact that a surprisingly large number of pieces were admitted to the National Academy annual in 1878, the largest to date with 747 works. Thirty-one sculptures—predominantly portrait busts—were submitted by seventeen artists, many of them such obscure names as F. T. Dunbar, D. B. Sheahan, and Edward Spring.⁵⁹ The gentlemen's parlor to the right of the main entrance, a room previously not used as gallery space, was dedicated entirely to the installation of these works.⁶⁰ Of the participating sculptors, just Warner showed his work at both the Society of American Artists and the National Academy. Although Warner may have been ideologically aligned with the tenets of the Society, the Academy was and would remain the major forum for sales and potential patronage in the American art market. Furthermore, Society members were encouraged to submit their works to both venues to downplay the rivalry between the two organizations.⁶¹ Most did, especially painters, acknowledging that they must alter their styles to suit the tastes of the organization with which they exhibited—more finished or polished for the Academy and more experimental (e.g., sketch-like) for the Society. Warner's three portraits—a bust and two medallions that are not possible to identify—were all but ignored at the Society exhibition.⁶² But at the Academy he received important coverage for his single work, a half-size plaster bust of dealer and designer Daniel Cottier (fig. 20). Other critically featured works were Jonathan Scott Hartley's ideal female figure *The Whirlwind* (1878;

remodeled, 1896; Montclair Art Museum, N.J.) and William O'Donovan's bronze bust of the Academy's former president William Page (fig. 21), commissioned by the Academy in 1877 and presented to the institution two years later.⁶³

Although most reviews evaluated the sculpture in passing, three New York newspapers—the *Daily Tribune*, the *Evening Post*, and the *Times*—ran full articles on the plastic arts in the 1878 annual, placing the submissions in context of the history of American sculpture and again sounding the call for new genius.⁶⁴ Significantly, in none of these articles was Saint-Gaudens's name invoked; he would not emerge as the unqualified leading delegate of a new school of sculptors until several years hence in spite of the importance the sculptor himself and his circle of devotees placed on his achievement at Saint Thomas Church. However, these articles deserve consideration as they draw out the issues that preoccupied critics vis à vis contemporary American sculpture and its development as a distinct school. Cook, for the *Daily Tribune*, lamented the lack of current talent: "Of contemporary names, it is not gracious to speak . . . how few of these stand any chance of surviving in their country's memory." To him, American sculpture would not progress until artists learned to infuse their work with sentiment, poetic feeling, and artistic purpose. Until then he believed, "to be weak is to be miserable indeed; this is the melancholy verdict of the Muse of Sculpture as she looks over her American domain." Favoring Warner's bust of Cottier over O'Donovan's portrait of Page, Cook felt the difference between "artistic feeling and artistic trick, between life and make-believe life" was succinctly demonstrated. It was not enough to mechanically "get" a likeness, but to "get" life as well.⁶⁵

The article for the *Evening Post*, presumably penned by George Sheldon, was more optimistic and praised works by O'Donovan, Hartley, and Warner. Like Cook, Sheldon differentiated between the qualities of verisimilitude and character in portraits, defining character as lying "some distance behind the features of a face, and only poetic insight can reach it and artistic skill can record it."⁶⁶ However, he commended O'Donovan's and Warner's portraits equally while recognizing the artists' dissimilar formal approaches: O'Donovan's faithful record contrasted with Warner's broadly modeled, less detailed work, foreshadowing elements in the debate over the sculpted sketch as a finished object that would dominate criticism of the sculpture in the 1881 and 1882 Society exhibits.

De Kay of the *Times* also found Warner's bust of Cottier appealing in its technical command and Greek-inspired spirit. According to de Kay, one of the main reasons that American sculptors had difficulty reaching their potential was that the artists associated with the Academy, specifically the older painters, did little to foster their own understanding of sculpture. As a result, sculptors "felt that there was very little chance that merit would be recognized either on the part of the Academicians or the press."⁶⁷ Implicit in these three reviews is acknowledgment of not only the embryonic status of native-based American sculptural production, but also a recognition that the field was at a crossroads, turning away from the waning powers of the Italian-based expatriates and awaiting new talent.

Two contemporaneous surveys of American sculpture also deserve mention here, underscoring the nationalistic perception of a distinct and credible school. William J. Clark's *Great American Sculptures*, published in Philadelphia in 1878, was a chauvinistic

summation of American accomplishments in sculpture to date.⁶⁸ Its goal was to promote and to make the public more attentive to “the beautiful specimens of sculpture which enrich and exalt our own day and land.”⁶⁹ In Clark’s introductory chapter, a far-ranging history of ancient and modern sculpture, he concluded that American sculpture already was equal if not greater than that of European, and called upon collectors to “to extend the cheering influence of their encouragement”⁷⁰ in order to promote further development. Seven chapters followed that discussed major neoclassical sculptors in turn; entire chapters were devoted to expatriate William Wetmore Story and the accomplishments of Philadelphia sculptors from William Rush to Joseph A. Bailly. Weighted almost entirely toward neoclassical expatriates, the book includes twelve full-page line engravings of such ideal marbles such as Harriet Hosmer’s *Beatrice Cenci* (1856; Saint Louis Mercantile Library) and Hiram Powers’s *Greek Slave* (1841-43; 1846, Corcoran Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.).

Clark’s book, which did not move beyond the perception of American sculpture epitomized by the Philadelphia Centennial, was followed by S. G. W. Benjamin’s article, “Sculpture in America,” published in *Harper’s New Monthly Magazine* in April 1879.⁷¹ Benjamin offered a remarkably incisive discussion of the history of American sculpture—from William Rush to the present—in the article’s sixteen pages. Like Clark, he held a positive view of American achievements, qualifying them as comparing “favorably with the best that has been created in modern times.”⁷² But after tracing the work of expatriate neoclassicists and stay-at-homes such as John Quincy Adams Ward and Erastus Dow Palmer, Benjamin emphasized the transitional nature of post-Centennial sculpture, turning to an emerging group of younger sculptors, “the new school of

sculpture that is gradually springing up.”⁷³ According to Benjamin, as a group, these younger artists, the likes of Hartley, Roberts, and Warner, would progress toward a national expression in evolutionary terms. They “have studied abroad, but have wisely concluded to return home and to found and to grow up with a new and progressive school of sculpture.” They were prone to produce art “still immature and highly emotional or lyrical, . . . often verg[ing] on the picturesque rather than the severely classic. But it is imaginative and powerful; its faults are those of an exuberant fancy that teems with thought, and they are undoubtedly the forerunners, if not the creators, of a thoroughly national school of sculpture.”⁷⁴ Benjamin devoted individualized words of praise for Saint-Gaudens, singling out the Saint Thomas reredos as “exquisite groups,” “one of the most important and beautiful works,” and including Timothy Cole’s engraving as an illustration. He distinguished Saint-Gaudens as “superior in technic skill, moved by a genius thoroughly trained in the best modern school of plastic art, that of Paris.”⁷⁵

Society of American Artists, New York, 1879

In the Society’s second exhibition, held at the Kurtz Gallery from March 10 to 29, 1879, there was a distinct increase in the number of sculptures displayed, if not in the range of sculptors participating. The writer for the *World*, likely William C. Brownell, observed that “a point of display is, as last year it was not, a comparatively large number of sculptures.”⁷⁶ Rather than being relegated to the gallery corners, a common and more convenient practice, the sculpture was installed at its center.⁷⁷ Of the 166 works, some nineteen were sculptures. Six (?) were by Saint-Gaudens, six by Warner, five by

O'Donovan, and one each by Hartley and Theodore Baur.⁷⁸ All were portraits with the exception of Warner's first ideal statuette, a marble half-draped female *Twilight* (1878; The Metropolitan Museum of Art)⁷⁹ and Baur's *Drunken Silenus, Sketch in Plaster* (unlocated), owned by William E. Marshall. Saint-Gaudens's bas-reliefs were catalogued in two groupings, each as "three bronze portrait medallions." Whether they were installed as trios is not known. From a two-page spread of engravings in the *Daily Graphic*, it is possible to identify three of these reliefs as portraits of Helen Maitland Armstrong (fig. 22), Dr. Walter Cary (fig. 23), and Emelia Ward Chapin (fig. 24).⁸⁰ Regrettably, the lack of specific references in the exhibition reviews to individual works by Saint-Gaudens makes it impossible to document the remaining three, or indeed whether there were three additional reliefs.⁸¹

Some twenty of Saint-Gaudens's early reliefs, completed in Paris for pleasure, portray friends and members of their families. Secure with income from monumental orders, the sculptor was free to experiment in these small pieces as diversion. Even in the few commissioned works, as probably is the case with *Walter Cary*,⁸² Saint-Gaudens pursued an innovative aesthetic in which virtuoso handling of form defines the composition. Most were private tokens, but from the start he must have viewed all as completed efforts worthy of public scrutiny in exhibitions. The *Armstrong*, *Cary*, and *Chapin* reliefs have in common the profile format, the sculptor's trademark use of decorative inscriptions, and vertical orientation.

Saint-Gaudens's portrait of eight-year-old Helen Maitland Armstrong, daughter of Maitland Armstrong, was the first of his appealing representations of children. It was modeled from memory and photographs in summer 1878, following his work with

Maitland Armstrong for the Paris Exposition earlier that year.⁸³ Saint-Gaudens's love of experimentation is evident in the irregular shape of the relief, with its projecting corners and striated edge. In the upper left-hand corner is the family's coat of arms, albeit in reverse. The relief of Walter Cary, a wealthy Buffalo physician, is a paradigm of the freely handled aesthetic that Saint-Gaudens perfected during the late 1870s. His flowing beard cuts diagonally across the picture plane, a bridge between his curling hair and the inscription arranged in horizontal registers at the bottom. At the lower right corner is a shield-like form with curling ribbon with the motto VIRTUTE EXCERPTA. The third relief is that of Emelia Ward Chapin of Springfield, Massachusetts, who befriended the Saint-Gaudenses in Paris.⁸⁴ The composition depicts a middle-aged woman in right-facing profile. Its focus is less the sitter's distinctive facial features than her ruffled lace collar and the twisted braid secured atop her head. Her portrait is framed above and below by decorative patterned strips.

In spite of the more felicitous placement of the sculpture and the large number of reviews devoted to the 1879 exhibition, the press paid little heed to the sculpture. In general, critical analysis was dominated by the debate over the validity of the painted sketch as a finished object and dismayed reaction to Thomas Eakins's forcibly realistic canvas, *The Gross Clinic* (1875; Jefferson Medical College, Thomas Jefferson University, Philadelphia).⁸⁵ This exhibition was far more progressive than the 1878 one. The hanging committee—Chase, Homer Dodge Martin, and J. Alden Weir—in essence gave the show over to the cosmopolitan aesthetics that had been held in check by more traditional painting techniques and deference to liberality the previous year. As the Society marginalized both more provincial Academicians and the distant European-based

Americans by rejecting or not soliciting their works, the exhibition became more progressive through the inclusion of sketches and studies that emphasized subjective over objective, and expressive over transcriptional.⁸⁶ Such works, constituting a fundamental component of cosmopolitan academic training, had generally been accepted as preparatory or first impressions rather than *finished* works suitable for exhibition. Critics found much to complain about whether in the suggestive Barbizon-inspired landscapes or slashing Old Master-indebted figure studies. The conservative *Commercial Advertiser* observed that the Society “would give greater satisfaction to the public if its members would exhibit finished works. It is rather bad taste to make a display of studies, and poor ones most of them, in our opinion and in the opinion of many others whom we might mention.”⁸⁷ A lack of mature artistic talent as of yet weaned from the academy or the master—technically or intellectually—was also a prevalent theme that would recur in response to subsequent Society annuals. As Cook wrote in the *Daily Tribune*: “We are offered the crude work of the undergraduate, the half-finished pictures of artists who seem to take pride in never bringing anything to completion, and the efforts of ambitious but feeble juveniles to walk in the shoes of Velazquez.”⁸⁸ Thus, “promise, rather than performance,” was the general critical response to the 1879 exhibition.⁸⁹

The press, clearly distracted by the painted sketch debate, devoted even less consideration than usual to the sculpture. From article to article reviewing the Society’s exhibition, analysis of the sculpture is unusually similar in its shallowness and in the repetition of certain watchwords. Particularly striking is the constant use of the word “excellent.” Saint-Gaudens’s bas-reliefs were “admired for their excellent taste, their decorative qualities,” and were called “excellent medallion portraits in bronze.”⁹⁰ They

were also cited as “excellent sculpture” in connection with submissions by Baur, O’Donovan, and Warner.⁹¹ *The World*, in speaking of the “excellence of the sculptures,” grandly proclaimed that these pieces “make an array altogether surpassing in interest anything of the kind that has hitherto graced an ‘annual exhibition’ in New York.”⁹²

Only Susan Nichols Carter and Cook discussed the sculpture at any length and with any true insight. Carter, evidently irritated by the sketch debacle, compared Saint-Gaudens’s submissions with Warner’s and O’Donovan’s, viewing them as favorably picturesque in their “irregularity of feature, the accidental effects of form in hair and dress, and the realism of irregular faces.” By taking “advantage of accidental points,” Carter found these bas-reliefs “seemed generally more complete and artistic” than the paintings displayed in the annual.⁹³ Ironically, however, what may have seemed accidental to Carter in fact would have to Saint-Gaudens been the product of measured experimentation and subtle compositional refinements, as reflected in the masterful strokes of Cary’s long beard, the uneven striated edge of the *Armstrong*, and the loose decorative banding on the *Chapin*.

Cook offered incisive commentary, but qualified praise: “The sculpture of this year is principally from the hands of Mr. Warner who sends a delicately beautiful marble figure and some spirited busts and medallions. From Mr. St. Gaudens, now in Paris, there are several bronze medallions of portrait heads; we had hoped for something more imaginative from hands so well calculated to give it to us as those of this artist.”⁹⁴ Evident not only is Cook’s ongoing (and stronger) loyalty to Warner, but also his frustration with Saint-Gaudens and his limited oeuvre, and presumably his sense that the sculptor had yet to realize his full talent. Cook’s disappointment may have been related to

the private nature of these objects—intimate small-scale portraits, not ideal compositions of a more public nature, as was the work for Saint Thomas Church. In fact, the largest of the three identifiable reliefs, *Dr. Walter Cary*, measures only 9 3/16 x 6 9/16 inches.⁹⁵

In spite of Cook's call for "more imaginative" work from Saint-Gaudens, the three bas-reliefs did indeed represent a new avenue of exploration for the sculptor. He soon became celebrated for this development in his oeuvre and over the course of his career would model more than eighty relief portraits. Although portraits offer less opportunity for interpretation than ideal compositions, Saint-Gaudens's innovative sketchy bas-reliefs meld a recognizable likeness with an interpretive blend of narrative and decorative elements to create a cohesive character portrait. In these works, loosely modeled clay approximated fluid pigment, allying these works as much with painting as with sculpture. In fact, La Farge had encouraged the sculptor to "paint a bas-relief," in emulation of the Italian Renaissance masters that Saint-Gaudens so admired but despaired of ever equaling.⁹⁶ Over the next decade, through the public exhibition of his bas-reliefs, the sculptor would redefine the formal properties of American relief sculpture, earning consistent accolades from the press and attracting a circle of followers and imitators.

Foreign exhibitions, 1880

Three European-based exhibitions in which Saint-Gaudens participated in 1880 warrant very brief mention: the annual salon in Paris, the summer exhibition of the recently-founded Grovesnor Gallery in London, and the first annual "Exposition de la Société

Donatello” in Florence. Although the artist’s standing in an international sphere is not the focus of this study, several interesting observations must be made that give context to Saint-Gaudens’s American exhibition history and his self-perception as an artist, using the Paris Salon as an example. The 1880 Salon was the first instance in which Saint-Gaudens exhibited his work on an international level.⁹⁷ It represented an artistic debut of sorts, for this exhibition was the time-honored premier forum for the promotion and sale of paintings and sculpture. Few American sculptures had been shown in the Salon before the 1870s, including ones by Richard Greenough, Howard Roberts, and John Rogers.⁹⁸ With the shift of the base of sculptural training and activity from Italy to Paris and the resulting American mastery of a new cosmopolitan aesthetic, these numbers dramatically increased during the 1880s and 1890s.

That Saint-Gaudens showed great interest in the sculpture at the annual Salons is incontestable. As a student at the École des Beaux-Arts in the late 1860s, he must have visited the vast displays. Immediately upon his return to Paris in July 1877, he went to see the Salon and reported to La Farge:

I was a little disappointed, particularly in the sculpture. Nevertheless I was delighted to see it. . . . The sculpture, although there was some very fine modeling, is all in a ‘rut’. . . . As in New York, the encouragement, distribution of medals, &c., &c., lies in the hands of the old ‘pompiers’ of 1830. The young fellows can’t have any orders if they don’t have medals, and they can’t get medals if they break from these fellows.⁹⁹

Further, Saint-Gaudens’s close friend and fellow student from the Jouffroy atelier, Paul Bion, wrote lengthy letters to him over the years, patiently detailing the sculptural submissions to the Salon.¹⁰⁰ From the 1870s through the early 1890s, Bion continually urged him to test his mettle against an international body of artists. Saint-Gaudens likewise recognized that his reputation as an *artist* had to be measured not only

nationally, but also globally. As a sculptor allied with the “young fellows,” in 1880 he clearly wished to make a statement about his emergent talent and to make American patrons and critics cognizant of his standing in an international arena.

The ostensible reason for Saint-Gaudens’s participation in the Salon of 1880, which opened May 1, was to put the *Farragut* in the public eye prior to its casting in bronze.¹⁰¹ Additionally Saint-Gaudens displayed a group of bas-reliefs, more ambitious in scale and composition than those shown at the Society of American Artists in 1879. These portraits, listed in the catalogue as “cinq médaillons en bronze,”¹⁰² may be identified as those of Frank Millet, Jules Bastien-Lepage, Maitland Armstrong, Helen Maitland Armstrong, and the Richard Watson Gilder family. Saint-Gaudens’s Salon experience was not a completely gratifying one. Despite specifications as to the proper height for installation of the *Farragut* (“a height of ten feet, as it was modeled”) and the lighting (“light must come from above, since it was designed for the open air”), the *Farragut* was poorly placed under a balcony on a two-foot base, “the whole center of the building taken over by those who have medals.”¹⁰³ Ultimately, after the artist protested, the piece was seen at a height of five feet with a side light. Saint-Gaudens’s work earned an honorable mention, the first American sculptor to receive this award and he received an order for two medallions such as exhibited; as a result, he confessed he felt “quite stuck up.”¹⁰⁴

Saint-Gaudens did earn limited critical notice for his *Farragut*. The correspondent for the *New York Times* addressed the complex issue of character projection and national differences in how character is perceived, belying a slight xenophobia:

The statue of Farragut, by M. Saint-Gaudens, of New-York, has been criticized sharply here [in Paris], probably because it is too quiet, too good-humored, too

unwarlike. What may readily seem to us, who knew the man, and who are used to an excess of unpretentiousness in many of our best soldiers and sailors, the finest point in the statue might quite as easily look to Frenchmen like a want of strength.¹⁰⁵

However, in writing for *Revue des Deux Mondes*, Émile Michel was able to recognize in the *Farragut* “the especial quality of a race . . . that initiative and boldness which Americans possess and which Farragut exemplified to the life.”¹⁰⁶ Such an informed reaction presaged the warm American critical response for the *Farragut* upon its unveiling in New York in May 1881; however, Saint-Gaudens did not again participate in a Salon or any foreign show until 1894, in the interim choosing only to exhibit in major American capitals and at prominent venues. But that critics could point to his participation in the 1880 Salon in the intervening years served him well: in 1887 Kenyon Cox, with Saint-Gaudens’s approbation, puffed (erroneously, it must be said) the showing of the *Farragut* at the Salon as the moment when “his talent was recognized and his position assured.”¹⁰⁷

However, in 1880, Saint-Gaudens must have felt that his efforts to earn international standing—in Paris, London, and Florence—were not a success. Little is known of the sculptor’s participation at the Grovesnor Gallery in London where he showed six reliefs,¹⁰⁸ or at the Donatello Society in Florence where he displayed the plaster *Farragut* and the five reliefs from the Salon.¹⁰⁹ Further calculated efforts toward his goal of international exposure were largely aborted until 1897 when he returned to live in Paris. In the meantime, Saint-Gaudens focused his efforts on American recognition and American commissions.

Society of American Artists, New York, 1880

For American critics, 1880 was a landmark year for sculpture at the Society of American Artists, a dramatic turning point toward the dominant naturalism of the French Beaux-Arts style. It also offered proof that American sculpture was developing thematically, stylistically, and expressively along a parallel, albeit, slightly slower course, as American painting. Further, many of the same critical issues—notably the “cult of unfinish” and the nationalistic concept of an American school—were pertinent to the plastic arts.

The Society’s exhibition of 163 works was held at the Miner Art Gallery at 845 Broadway from March 17 to April 16.¹¹⁰ The internal strife in which the young Society was embroiled—between its conservative and progressive factions as well as at-home and foreign artists—has been well rehearsed, but it is important to note that these events and subsequent policy changes impacted the aesthetic flavor of the 1880 exhibition.¹¹¹ Like its predecessor, this show was technically experimental, but now the selection tended toward figural subjects that emphasized a command of European academic strictures, for instance J. Alden Weir’s *The Good Samaritan* (1880; St. Paul’s Episcopal Church, Windham, Conn.) and Sargent’s *Carolus-Duran* (1879; Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute, Williamstown, Mass.), a portrait of his French master.¹¹² Remarkably, the selection was made by just one member, La Farge, while the hanging was carried out by Warner, Ryder, and William Gedney Bunce, the latter a close friend of Saint-Gaudens’s from their years in Rome and Paris. As in the 1879 exhibition, broadly or

vigorously handled paintings were a dominant presence, as was recurrent critical discussion over the issues of artistic completeness and subjective interpretation.

A respectable eighteen sculptures were shown at the Society: eight pieces by Warner, four by O'Donovan, three by Baur, and one each by Saint-Gaudens, Hartley, and Olivia S. Ward, the only new participating sculptor. As was customary, the majority of submissions were portrait busts and medallions. The exceptions were Baur's two bas-reliefs and a plaster dog's head and Warner's terra cotta head of an Indian chief, related to a commission for architectural sculpture for the adornment of the Long Island Historical Society (now the Brooklyn Historical Society). Remarkably, several critics felt that the merit of the exhibition lay in greater measure with the sculpture than the painting. The *Evening Post* stated: "It is, indeed, in its pieces of sculpture that the dignity of the exhibition largely resides." Earl Shinn affirmed in *The Nation*: "The sculptor's part of the present exhibition is the strongest, most illustrative, and least prentice-like."¹¹³

Of all the submissions, two captured critical fancy and monopolized exhibition reviews: Warner's tinted plaster bust of painter J. Alden Weir (fig. 25), then serving as secretary for the Society, and Saint-Gaudens's life-size half-length marble portrait of Theodore Dwight Woolsey (fig. 26), president of Yale College from 1846 to 1871. Both sculptures were prominently installed. The *Woolsey* was placed in the doorway leading to a smaller gallery overlooking Broadway while the *Weir* faced it at the other end of this gallery where the majority of the sculpture was displayed.¹¹⁴ This advantageous placement may be attributed not only to the relative importance of the sitters, but also to the senior status of these two sculptors within the organization.

If forward-thinking critics had been frustrated by the lack of appropriate American sculpture to explicate their aesthetic preferences for the direction of the field, these two portraits—as different as they are technically—collectively provided a perfect pedagogical model, tangible three-dimensional expressions of American cultural maturity. In the *Daily Tribune*, Cook proclaimed: “Nothing so marks the new time as the presence here of two pieces of sculpture, the like of which for beauty and for purely sculptural quality has not been seen before at any American exhibition.” Using a botanical analogy, he found the attractions of the exhibition were “to make Spring brighter by matching the hope that blooms with croons and daffodil, with the promise, here more than half fulfilled, of an art all freshly budding from American soil.”¹¹⁵ Similarly, Mariana Griswold Van Rensselaer, writing for the *American Architect and Building News*, judged the *Weir* and *Woolsey* as “enough to settle the question of whether or no truly good sculpture is possible in our day and country.”¹¹⁶

To the likes of Cook and Van Rensselaer, identifiable historical pedigree combined with an assured modern style were the desired traits for American sculpture. This intangible combination of elements was most fully realized in Warner’s bust of *Weir*, which was probably executed as a demonstration of artistic camaraderie.¹¹⁷ Celebrated for a classical spirit transcending mere portraiture, it vitalized Beaux-Arts portrait sculpture in the same way that Saint-Gaudens’s *Farragut* would for public sculpture a year later. De Kay, also a partisan of Warner’s, wrote effusively about the bust and proclaimed it “the finest most virile piece of work yet exhibited in New York.”¹¹⁸ Immediate technical and conceptual inspiration—including the asymmetrical termination of the undraped shoulders and integral socle with decorative tablet—is found

in the work of Warner's French mentor, Jean-Baptiste Carpeaux. However, writers were eager to emphasize its artistic lineage, likening the quick turn of the head, tufted hair, taut skin, pronounced tendons, and energetic modeling to that of busts by the ancient Greeks and Romans. Van Rensselaer found it "startling from its almost antique vigor of conception and grace of treatment. The illusion was heightened by the classic, spirited beauty of the head, and also by the tinting of the plaster, which had assumed exactly the color of a long-buried marble."¹¹⁹ In a similar vein, Benjamin observed in the *American Art Review*: "There certainly has never been executed a bust in this country more truthful and artistic than the classical portrait of Mr. Weir by Olin L. Warner. We have no means of comparing it with works of the Periclean period, as no true portrait busts of that time are in existence, but it certainly is worthy of having a place by the side of Roman sculpture."¹²⁰ The *Weir* also elicited comparison to pedigreed Renaissance sculpture, notably Michelangelo's *David*. Shinn assessed it as "a portrait-bust of a fellow-artist, based upon Michael Angelo's 'David' perhaps, but energetic and graphic" while the *Art Amateur* found it "evidently a reflection from Michael Angelo's 'David,' but spirited and alive."¹²¹

Interestingly, critics avoided the issue of whether the bust was an accurate likeness of Weir, a revealing departure from the preoccupation with the issue of verisimilitude that had dominated the writing on sculpture for the 1878 Academy annual.¹²² The *World* observed a melding of truth and ideality:

Whether it is like Mr. Weir his friends will be able to judge, but it is safe to say that if Mr. Weir is like it he is a person of most commanding mien and aspect. . . . For if it is an unmistakable portrait, it is quite evident that portraiture so-called it plainly transcends. . . . we have a head which is as impressive to a stranger from its artistic idealization as it can be to the subject for its vital resemblance. This is nothing new in American portraiture, but it is new in

American sculpture at least in degree.¹²³

More important to new movement critics was not the rote replication of material likeness, but the subtle expression of spirit and fluent articulation of formal qualities. Clarence Cook articulated his general philosophy: “We belong to the school that holds the poetry, the beauty, the feeling of a picture or a poem, or any work of art, to be of more importance than the execution.”¹²⁴ On a secondary level, the bust appealed as a spirited representation of a Beaux-Arts-trained painter who exemplified the cosmopolitan aesthetic values of the younger American artists.

Saint-Gaudens’s half-length portrait of Woolsey had only slightly less critical impact than the bust of Weir. As noted in Chapter 2, the portrait was commissioned in March 1875 by Edwards Pierrepont, one of Saint-Gaudens’s sitters during his return trip to New York in 1872. Pierrepont, in turn, ordered a likeness of his teacher Woolsey, which he presented to his alma mater, Yale College, in 1880.¹²⁵ The sittings took place during spring 1875 in New Haven. By early 1877 the original plaster model was at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts,¹²⁶ however Saint-Gaudens did not translate the *Woolsey* portrait to marble until 1878 while he spent the winter in Rome.¹²⁷ To compensate for this delay, the sculptor decided to enlarge the scale of the portrait without any resulting increase in expense to Pierrepont.¹²⁸ Clearly Saint-Gaudens enjoyed an unusual degree of freedom with his client, or felt no compunction about taking artistic license because he modified the termination from a simpler bust to half-length. He informed Pierrepont: “I have not only modelled the head but added the arms and hands one of which holds a book. . . . [I] made a large pedestal on which an inscription can be

placed—Thereby making it much more suitable for a presentation as I understand you are to make it.”¹²⁹

In the final result, completed in 1879,¹³⁰ Saint-Gaudens depicted Woolsey in a contemplative, scholarly guise, referencing not only his college presidency, but also his professional roles as an authority on Greek literature as well as on international law. The septuagenarian is posed with his head inclined to his right, ample sideburns framing a long face with receding hairline. His arms are casually crossed, right over left, and in his right hand he holds a book, its pages propped open with his index finger. Woolsey is attired in an academic gown with billowing upper puffed sleeves and abundant and emphatically delineated folds. The neckline is open to reveal contemporary shirt and vest, collar and necktie. The half-length termination, unusual in American sculpture, is used for the first time in Saint-Gaudens’s oeuvre. Also significant is the rectangular wood pedestal, which the sculptor completed in collaboration with White.¹³¹ The result generates a commanding projection of character reminiscent of the *William Maxwell Evarts* bust (fig. 13), but on a more ambitious scale and format.

If the diminutive reliefs Saint-Gaudens submitted to the 1879 exhibition emphasized the sculptor’s personal alliances, the *Woolsey* was a public presentation piece, underscored by its commanding scale and marble medium. Although it was a noticeable departure from the small reliefs, Saint-Gaudens’s decision to display what in hindsight is stylistically atypical in his oeuvre was in fact a calculated effort to prove his range and to distinguish him from other young sculptors now working in the fashionable sketchy style. Further, the esteemed repute of the sitter, who was from an old New York family, also served to heighten interest in the portrait and in Saint-Gaudens whose

reputation thus far rested primarily on the chancel reredos at St. Thomas Church.¹³² That the sculptor perceived the significance of the portrait is revealed in a draft of a letter to Pierrepont in which he notes: "I have made the bust very large and in fact quite an important work. . . . I trust you will allow the bust to be exhibited at the Ex. of the Society of Am. Artists in February [sic]. Mr. [Wyatt] Eaton will call on you to obtain and will see that it is placed where it will be seen to advantage."¹³³

The delay in the marble's completion in fact resulted in fortuitous timing for Saint-Gaudens's reputation. Not only was he removed from the day-to-day New York art world while in Paris, he also had yet to submit significant sculptures to the Society's exhibitions. Critical interest in him had become sporadic and was perceptibly waning. Other sculptors, particularly Warner, who continued to display his work at both the Society and the National Academy, were receiving more consistent press—and praise. Although Warner had yet to earn a major public commission, as Saint-Gaudens had, he had developed a solid reputation as a gifted sculptor and enjoyed the unwavering advocacy of Brownell, Cook, and de Kay. The differences between Warner and Saint-Gaudens, the two most skilled artists working in the Beaux-Arts style, were realized not only in their works, but also in their artistic training and personalities. An article in the *World* revealed perceptions about the manner by which each man developed his reputation, Warner by innate talent and Saint-Gaudens by training and association. Having distinguished the clear formal differences between the *Weir* and the *Woolsey*, the writer then categorized the artistic disparities between Warner and Saint-Gaudens:

We may note that Mr. Saint-Gaudens and Mr. Warner differ as the trained and cultivated artist and the 'born' sculptor, not because it is to be understood that the latter is not thoroughly educated in his art or that the former had as distinct an original bent towards painting as towards sculpture, but to hint at a

characterization of each which can hardly be put into words. Perhaps it may be said that Mr. Saint-Gaudens has, if not a greater necessity for the many-sidedness which cultivation implies, at least a greater power of assimilating and improving it. It is quite certain that Mr. Warner does not need it at all—beyond, that is to say, the most elementary sort; and that he would have modelled just as well if he had never made the acquaintances of the ‘principles of art.’ It follows from this, perhaps, that his genius is the more incontestable, and its quality less complex . . . on the other hand . . . Mr. St. Gaudens has the greater flexibility and a wide range, born of reflection and, to judge from many of his things, and introspection alien to works of absolute simplicity.¹³⁴

Indeed Warner and Saint-Gaudens were celebrated as much for their qualifiable differences, as for their shared talent. If the *Weir* was admired for its expression of spirit, the critical appeal of the *Woolsey* lay in its degree of reality, true structure, and finish. The *Evening Post* called it “a refined, speaking, charming portrait.”¹³⁵ In the *Daily Tribune*, Cook expressed his pleasure that Saint-Gaudens finally had realized his potential talent. While Cook felt that Warner had already prepared the viewer stylistically for the “strength and classic feeling” of his *Weir* in smaller earlier works, Saint-Gaudens had not done so. He observed, “Mr. St. Gaudens comes to us now in reality for the first time.”¹³⁶

The quality of realism writers recognized in the *Woolsey* must be distinguished from a merely clever transcription of facial features. Instead they approved of the thorough and artistic manner of execution. Van Rensselaer wrote of this admiration:

Mr. St. Gaudens’s half-length of President Woolsey . . . was the wonder of critics, so accurate the likeness, so unconventional yet simple and artistic the conception, so beautiful the execution. The texture of the surfaces, worked with careful, delicate, almost brush-like touches, yet deprived of nothing in breadth, was well worthy of notice. It was as different from the mechanical smoothness of the average modern work as from the inartistic over-elaboration of detail and accessories, that has usually characterized a desire for less insipidity. The statue was as distinctively American . . . as Mr. Chase’s General [J. Watson] Webb [1880; Shelburne Museum, Shelburne, Vt.], and, at the same time, as artistic. The difference in spirit between the two well exemplified the difference that should be maintained between the spirit and the ideals of the two arts.¹³⁷

Van Rensselaer wished to maintain a rigid distinction between the arts of painting and sculpture, as did Shinn, writing for the *Nation*. He however could not resist equating the *Woolsey* to the hyper-realistic painted portraits of sixteenth-century master Hans Holbein the Younger.¹³⁸

Not every critical comment on the *Woolsey* was favorable. The *World* compared the installation of the half-length portrait on its pedestal as “stimulat[ing] the profane suggestion of a Punch and Judy show.”¹³⁹ Further, several reviewers found the treatment of costume detracted from the overall effect and wrote of it in equivocal terms. Even *Scribner's Monthly* commented on the “stiff academic robe which by no means aids the general aspect. Nevertheless, it may be said that the beauty and truth of expression in pose and features overcome this drawback.”¹⁴⁰ De Kay praised the *Woolsey* as “a masterpiece,” but found in the sitter’s sleeves the effect of “picturesqueness.”¹⁴¹ This favored contemporary term held conflicting connotations, both positive and negative. Its confused usage is evident alone in reviews about the *Woolsey*. The *World* found the *Woolsey* lacking positive qualities of “virility and picturesqueness.”¹⁴² However, in sculptural parlance it more often than not indicated a tendency toward fussiness or overworking of drapery or the inclusion of debatably extraneous accessories.

Alternatively, it suggested immaturity or high emotion. De Kay wrote:

It may be questioned . . . whether Mr. Saint Gaudens was wise to make so much of the gown with puffed sleeves. It looks as if this part were a concession to some desire on the part of the purchaser or sitter, rather than the sculptor; for Saint Gaudens could hardly fail to understand that so much obtrusion of what is called in sculptor slang the ‘picturesque’ would detract to a certain extent from the nobility of the face.¹⁴³

Interestingly, it may be remembered that Saint-Gaudens's correspondence with Pierrepont suggests that the treatment of the garment was indeed the choice of the sculptor, rather than a stipulation of the client. Nevertheless, it is important to note that de Kay, a member of the Gilder's inner circle, publicly took the sculptor to task, one of the first instances of bad press to which Saint-Gaudens was subjected. Privately too, de Kay complained about the *Woolsey*, reporting to Gilder: "The St. Gaudens I did not care so much for."¹⁴⁴

Given the furor over the "cult of unfinish" surrounding the paintings in the 1879 and 1880 Society exhibitions, it is hardly surprising that critics were highly sensitized to this question in relation to sculpture. The issue of finish had emerged as one of the dominant themes in American art criticism in the mid-to-late 1870s, particularly with regard to paintings by Homer and Munich-trained artists such as Currier and Frank Duveneck. A seminal *New York Times* editorial of March 1878, "A Plea for Finish in Art," argued that overly finished paintings took on a clever, mechanical, or even deceptive appearance. On the other hand, paintings lacking finish reflected hasty, lazy, or even rote imitation of great French artists such as Camille Corot, Narcisse Diaz, and Théodore Rousseau, or the German painter Wilhelm Leibl.¹⁴⁵ De Kay, who presumably penned this article, and other forward-thinking critics regarded imitation and literal description as passing phases through which American artists necessarily moved in order to develop subjective styles that would elevate them to international prominence. Writing in 1880, Benjamin traced this progression: "First . . . the feeble, fluttering attempts at articulate language; then imitation of those whose art has the precedence in point of time; then individuality of style or art language."¹⁴⁶ The predilection of young Munich- and

Paris-trained painters for the bravura brushwork of the sketch—in which line was secondary to mass, light and shade—thus was regarded as a passing stage in the quest for personal style. The will to innovate, not prolonged apprenticeship, was the pathway to artistic maturity, and as with sculptors, the sentiment was prevalent around 1880 that American painters were on the verge of such a breakthrough.

In this context, writers were understandably unanimous in their judgment of Saint-Gaudens's *Woolsey* as a paradigm of sculptural finish. However, they also produced unusually lively remarks about the appropriateness of exhibiting sketch-like sculptures, revitalizing the issue that dogged Saint-Gaudens after the rejection of his plaster sketch to the 1877 annual of the National Academy of Design. While there was great dissent among critics about what signaled an acceptable degree of completion, there had been a significant loosening as far as the permitting the exhibition of these sketchy works. Discussion about the sketch in sculpture was kindled in the 1880 exhibition and carried forth heatedly over the next several years.

Several issues that emerged in relation to works by O'Donovan and Baur in the 1880 exhibition deserve mention here since they are crucial to understanding what critics saw as the deficiencies of the sketch technique. Like Warner, O'Donovan showed his works at both the National Academy and the Society of American Artists. A comparison of his submissions to the respective institutions reveals a deliberate stylistic differentiation whereby the more polished, tightly modeled, and therefore saleable, pieces were shown at the Academy while more fluid, sketchier, experimental works were displayed at the less commercial Society.¹⁴⁷ As Will H. Low recalled: "In the Society exhibitions it was notorious that no one sold anything; we were popularly supposed to be

producing art for art's sake, and we were left severely alone to that delightful occupation."¹⁴⁸ This aesthetic strategy was adopted by painters and sculptors alike, including Weir, Eakins, and O'Donovan (although not Saint-Gaudens who abstained from exhibiting at the Academy altogether).¹⁴⁹ It frustrated critics who recognized that this chameleon-like approach validated the premise that artists who were perfectly capable of completing polished works purposefully chose not to.

O'Donovan's four entries to the 1880 Society exhibition included two alto-relief portraits of the poet Edmund Clarence Stedman (ca. 1879; unlocated) and the sculptor Jonathan Scott Hartley (ca. 1880; unlocated). There were also two reliefs titled *Character Sketch* and *Bas-Relief—Sketch*, the latter by which their titles alone drew attention to their novelty as exhibited works. While painters had been submitting sketches, studies, and impressions to the Society exhibitions for the past two years, they made their first regular appearance in titles of sculpture in 1880, revealing a consistent stylistic interplay between paintings and sculpture at the Society annuals.¹⁵⁰ O'Donovan's reliefs drew praise from the critic for the *Evening Post*, who wrote: "Mr. O'Donovan appears in his powerful bronze alto-relief of Mr. E. C. Stedman, in a sketchy almost vanishing alto-relief of Mr. J. S. Hartley, and in a third alto-relief, still more vanishing of Mr. Bainbridge Smith. The two latter pieces are as artistic as they are slight."¹⁵¹ Interestingly this writer condoned the vanishing or shadowy qualities that so disturbed other more strident critics, the sense that relief sculpture had become a form of three-dimensional drawing in which subject and background merged. This technical departure was described accurately and non-judgmentally in the *Art Amateur* as "novel experiments in introducing painting-like shading and illumination into bas-relief."¹⁵² The issue was further taken up in the *World*.

After praising the *Stedman* and *Hartley* reliefs as “excellent,” and “striking,” the writer continued: “Mr. O’Donovan we note has abandoned the clear-cut lines so agreeable in medallions and seems to rely on some subtlety of treatment which has to be very well done to be satisfactory, though, of course, this is one way of escaping ‘hardness.’”¹⁵³ In this vein, several critics contrasted the emphatic undercut outlining and careful modeling of Warner’s five profile bas-reliefs to O’Donovan’s sketchy reliefs, positively assessing the former while berating the latter as a failure to complete a work or a violation of sculptural boundaries.¹⁵⁴

At the crux of the discussion about the sculpture sketch was the belief of most critics that the distinction between the fluidity of painting and the modeled structure of sculpture should be rigidly maintained. Two critics, Shinn and de Kay, wrote passionately about this issue. Shinn outlined the formal challenges of sculpture:

In sculpture . . . the struggle between structural design and the seeking for values and vigors must come to its final test. Sculpture nowadays seeks graphic picturesqueness of light and shade more than heretofore; but it is of necessity kept in a state of wholesome confinement to structure; pure Rembrandtism in sculpture, with design in mere rudiment and chiaroscuro in high honor is dared by no one. Yet while the tiresome Academic modeling seeks structure before all things, some modern modeling has dared a great deal by falsification of structure.

To illustrate this point, Shinn turned to O’Donovan:

Those [reliefs] of Mr. O’Donovan . . . are mysterious and shadowy rather than incisive; it is evidently this artist’s determination to get rid of the commonplace of the die sinker. He has given evidence of genius in former works which will make the public treat these more hesitating tentatives with more respect. The effort to leave the camp of sculptors bodily behind, and to find that camp where the etchers play with light and shade and the painters convey color and imitate movement, is the besetting need of the moment for him; he presents bas-reliefs which are not profiles . . . he sinks these profiles into their fields, as if he would lose them in shadow, like the portraits by old masters; he etches these fields with lines and scratches and every device to suggest distance or atmosphere; it is not sculpture, perhaps, and it is clearly experiment; but it is the experiment of an artist to whom ordinary experience has become satiating from the completeness with which he

has mastered it, and for whom the trammels of sculpture have become irksome in a keen appreciation of the beauties of sister arts.¹⁵⁵

Shinn was more generous in his assessment of Baur's three sculptures—*Bas Relief-Plenty*; *Bas Relief-A Fragment*; and a plaster *Dog's Head*—in relation to two-dimensional works. He acknowledged: "Slight as they are, [they] show that same subtle calculation of chiaroscuro which sculpture has heretofore so imperfectly understood, or seemed but to attain by an occasional vagary."¹⁵⁶

De Kay perceived this sketchy modeling style as symptomatic of laziness and was particularly critical of O'Donovan: "What does Mr. O'Donovan mean by letting the profiles of his portraits slide away into the background, as if the artist had been too weak to bring them out! And why does he continue to make his sitters look as if they were half-asleep! There must be some method in this mannerism."¹⁵⁷ Likewise, he also singled out Baur's three works as representing promise unfulfilled: "The sculptor Baur shows several highly imaginative plaster bass [sic]-reliefs—mere sketches in plaster, which one longs to see carried out adequately. . . . It is a pity that a man evidently strong in fancy and with a most exquisite touch should be so wretchedly represented."¹⁵⁸ This notion of irresolution was the subject of an insightful article, "Artistic Incompletion," in the *Evening Post*. Offering contrasting examples between "finished" works and "studies" drawn from the works in the 1880 exhibition, it raised the complex issue of artistic intent; that is, how far artists took their works before they considered them completed in effect, if not a high degree of resolution. The writer came down on the side of more technically finished paintings and sculpture, stating that one of the reasons artists did not finish their works was because they did not possess an adequate degree of artistic training to do so. Saint-Gaudens's *Woolsey*, celebrated for its finish, was contrasted with Baur's "sketchy casts":

If Mr. St. Gaudens's bust is admirable—as undoubtedly it is most admirable—what shall be said of Mr. Baur's frieze? And if the Society not only tolerates but honors so finished a piece of work as Mr. St. Gaudens's why should it either tolerate or honor Mr. Baur's incompleteness? Mr. St. Gaudens is emphatically both a sculptor and an artist. Mr. Baur is an artist certainly, but apparently much less of a sculptor, and obviously with methods quite diverse.¹⁵⁹

The Society's exhibition of 1880 represents a significant turning point in critical writing about American sculpture. It arguably was the most extensive consideration of American sculpture in an annual exhibition setting to date, and a coalescing moment for the nationalistic concept of an American school of sculpture. Across the board, writers for the major city newspapers and art periodicals weighed in on the plastic arts, often at length. New York critics had become savvy about the direction American sculpture was taking, or more properly, that they wished it would take: the writing went beyond mere description of subjects to delve into some of the more engaging formal issues of the day. From a modern-day perspective, one grasps the importance of Saint-Gaudens's participation in this exhibition. The *Woolsey's* degree of finish, from hindsight unusual in his oeuvre, served Saint-Gaudens well in more disparaging discussions about the sculptural sketch. Submitting the *Woolsey*—what the artist considered a major work—was a calculated—and successful—move, ensuring that the sculptor's reputation did not languish in this country during the months leading up to his return and to the unveiling of the *Farragut*.

Notes to Chapter 3

¹ Homer Saint-Gaudens, ed., *The Reminiscences of Augustus Saint-Gaudens* (New York: Century Co., 1913), 1:163 (hereafter cited as *Reminiscences*).

² Augustus Saint-Gaudens Papers, Dartmouth College Library, Hanover, New Hampshire, microfilm reel 17, frame 439 (hereafter cited as Saint-Gaudens Papers, DCL).

³ On La Farge's decoration of Saint Thomas Church, see H. Barbara Weinberg, *The Decorative Work of John La Farge*, Ph.D. diss., Columbia University, 1972 (New York and London: Garland Publishing, 1977), 146-67. See also J. Robert Wright, *Saint Thomas Church Fifth Avenue* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.; New York: Saint Thomas Church Fifth Avenue, 2001), esp. 74-75, 106.

⁴ Weinberg, *The Decorative Work of John La Farge*, 146.

⁵ Homer Saint-Gaudens noted the reredos' significance for the sculptor in the *Reminiscences* (1:190): "They were most important for him at the time, and added greatly to his reputation at home." However in his draft copy, Augustus Saint-Gaudens made only brief mention of them, devoting just two sentences to the Saint Thomas work.

⁶ For instance, Saint-Gaudens wrote on August 29, 1877: "I have commenced on the sculpture and I fell very sanguine about it. I will send you a photograph of the first bas-relief the day after to-morrow. I am not fully satisfied with it but I will see my way through. . . ." (*Reminiscences*, 1:192). In turn, La Farge offered advice on the handling of shadows in September 15, 1877, letter: "Only one thing to keep in mind; make the projections sufficient to cast a strong shadow and keep the darks as I have them." Quoted in *Reminiscences*, 1:191. For additional selections from their correspondence, printed in *Reminiscences*, see 1:190-206.

⁷ On Low, see Laura L. Meixner, "Will Hicok Low (1853-1932): His Early Career and Barbizon Experience," *American Art Journal* 17 (autumn 1985): 51-70.

⁸ Saint-Gaudens to La Farge, 10 September 1877 (draft or copy), Saint-Gaudens Papers, DCL, microfilm reel 9, frames 160-62. Also quoted in *Reminiscences*, 1:196, 199.

⁹ Saint-Gaudens to La Farge, 20 September 1877 (draft or copy), Saint-Gaudens Papers, DCL, microfilm reel 9, frame 136. Also quoted in *Reminiscences*, 1:200.

¹⁰ Saint-Gaudens to Gilder, [15 November 1877], Saint-Gaudens Papers, DCL, microfilm reel 7, frames 495-96.

¹¹ La Farge to Saint-Gaudens, [November 1877], Saint-Gaudens Papers, DCL, microfilm reel 9, frames 294-96.

¹² Saint-Gaudens to La Farge, 1 December 1877, quoted in *Reminiscences*, 1:203.

¹³ La Farge to Alfred Roelker, 12 August 1905, La Farge Family Papers, Manuscripts and Archives, Sterling Library, Yale University, New Haven, Connecticut, quoted in Weinberg, *The Decorative Work of John La Farge*, 148 n. 3.

¹⁴ Eaton to Saint-Gaudens, 12 November 1877, Saint-Gaudens Papers, DCL, microfilm reel 5, frames 748-50.

¹⁵ Eaton to Saint-Gaudens, 17 December 1877, Saint-Gaudens Papers, DCL, microfilm reel 5, frame 759.

¹⁶ Helena de Kay Gilder to Saint-Gaudens, 11 November 1877, Saint-Gaudens Papers, DCL, microfilm reel 7, frames 412-14.

¹⁷ Weinberg, *The Decorative Work of John La Farge*, 153.

¹⁸ *Reminiscences*, 1:190-92. After completing the Saint Thomas work and then spending the winter of 1878 in Italy, Saint-Gaudens lamented, "Oh, how I would like to do it over again—and have time, after what I have seen in Italy." See Saint-Gaudens to Stanford White, [March 1878] (copy), Saint-Gaudens Papers, DCL, microfilm reel 13, frame 888.

¹⁹ Weinberg, *The Decorative Work of John La Farge*, 150.

²⁰ "Altar Decorations at St. Thomas," *New York Times*, 31 October 1877, 4. Although de Kay criticized certain aspects of the scheme, including the lighting, he was favorably impressed, judging La Farge "the first painter in America . . . there is no State in Europe that would not be proud to own him." Placed in this context, Helena de Kay Gilder's mention in her 11 November letter (see n. 16) of her brother's praise for Saint Thomas makes sense.

²¹ "St. Thomas's Chancel," *New York World*, 28 October 1877, 4, reprinted with changes in "St. Thomas's Chancel," *American Architect and Building News* 2 (3 November 1877): 354.

²² Saint-Gaudens to Gilder, 16 November 1877, Saint-Gaudens Papers, DCL, microfilm reel 7, frames 491-94. Saint-Gaudens also noted that he allowed Low to co-sign the reredos.

²³ Gilder subsequently praised the results of Cole's work (with an overt plug for Saint-Gaudens) and explained the process of its production: "The lovers of art are indebted for this exquisite reproduction of one of the most important pieces of sculpture yet made in this country, to a young wood-chopper by the name of Cole. Mr. Cole was not assisted by any draughtsman. The group was photographed upon the wood, and cut by the engraver with a large photograph before him. But the engraver could never have given so accurate, so valuable a copy, if he had not, also, seen and been inspired by the original in its place

in the church; if he had not done his work in the same spirit in which St. Gaudens had done his." See [Richard Watson Gilder], "The Old Cabinet," *Scribner's Monthly* 16 (June 1878): 292. Saint-Gaudens, too, was pleased by the engraving, writing Stanford White in March 1878: "Yes, the St. Thomas engraving in *Scribner's* was stunning." See Saint-Gaudens to White, [March 1878] (copy), Saint-Gaudens Papers, DCL, microfilm reel 13, frame 888.

²⁴ [Clarence Cook], "Recent Church Decoration," *Scribner's Monthly* 15 (February 1878): 569-77. The engraving appears on p. 576.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 570.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 574.

²⁷ Saint-Gaudens to White, [March 1878] (copy), Saint-Gaudens Papers, DCL, microfilm reel 13, frame 888.

²⁸ "Art Work in the Chancel," *New York Times*, 6 May 1878, 5.

²⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁰ *Reminiscences*, 1:250-51.

³¹ Richard Watson Gilder to Saint-Gaudens, 6 June 1877; and Helena de Kay Gilder to Saint-Gaudens, 15 June 1877, Saint-Gaudens Papers, DCL, microfilm reel 7, frames 405, 400-1.

³² Saint-Gaudens to Gilder, 12 October 1877, Saint-Gaudens Papers, DCL, microfilm reel 7, frame 655.

³³ Saint-Gaudens to Milne Ramsey, 11 January 1878 (draft), Saint-Gaudens Papers, DCL, microfilm reel 1, frame 320, notes Dubois as the replacement. Saint-Gaudens to Blashfield, 19 January 1878, Edwin Howland Blashfield Papers, Manuscript Collection, New-York Historical Society, names Blashfield. For further discussion, see Jennifer A. Martin Bienenstock, "The Formation and Early Years of the Society of American Artists: 1877-1884" (Ph.D. diss., City University of New York, 1983), 35.

³⁴ Saint-Gaudens to Gilder, 29 December 1879, reprinted in *Reminiscences*, 1:258.

³⁵ *Reminiscences*, 1:251; and Maitland Armstrong, *Day Before Yesterday: Reminiscences of a Varied Life*, ed. Margaret Armstrong (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1920), 267.

³⁶ See Exposition Universelle Internationale, *Catalogue officiel . . . tome 1, groupe 1, oeuvres d'art* (Paris: Imprimerie Nationale, 1878), 201-10. Margaret C. Conrads, *Winslow Homer and the Critics: Forging a National Art in the 1870s*, exh. cat.

(Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press in association with the Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, 2001), 140, lists the members of the New York selection committee: Edwin D. Morgan, J. W. Pinchot, Parke Godwin, John Taylor Johnston, H. Q. Marchand [sic, H. G. Marquand], Robert G. Dun, Robert Gordon, John Sherwood, N. M. Beckwith, and Charles S. Smith.

³⁷ For Armstrong's exclusionary tactics against certain American painters, including Albert Bierstadt, see Armstrong to Saint-Gaudens, 20 March 1878, Saint-Gaudens Papers, DCL, microfilm reel 1, frame 359. He advised, "Do not make any promises to artists. You have not right to do so and it might give you trouble."

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Lucy H. Hooper, "The Pictures at the Paris Exposition. IV. The American Pictures," *Art Journal* (New York) 4 (November 1878): 349. A Philadelphia native, Hooper was on the editorial staff of *Lippincott's* from 1868 to 1893. After moving to Paris in 1874, she served as a foreign correspondent for *Lippincott's*, *Appleton's Journal*, and the *Art Journal*. She also wrote several novels and contributed to Philadelphia, Baltimore, and Saint Louis newspapers. See *Dictionary of American Biography*, s.v. "Hooper, Lucy Hamilton."

⁴⁰ Now unlocated, the candelabra were purchased by James Gordon Bennett, publisher of the *New York Herald*. See Henry J. Duffy and John H. Dryfhout, *Augustus Saint-Gaudens: American Sculptor of the Gilded Age*, exh. cat. (Washington, D.C.: Trust for Museum Exhibitions in cooperation with Saint-Gaudens National Historic Site, Cornish, N.H., 2003), 52.

⁴¹ *Reminiscences*, 1:251.

⁴² Quoted in Armstrong, *Day Before Yesterday*, 269-70.

⁴³ As Bienenstock has observed, the selection of the dates revealed a tension between those artists advocating a conciliatory approach to the Academy and those who preferred a more contradictory stance. Although the Society's catalogue stated that the show closed on April 5, it did in fact close days earlier, just prior to the opening of the Academy annual on April 2, thus a victory of sorts for those artists who perceived the two organizations as rival forces. See Bienenstock, "The Formation and Early Years of the Society of American Artists," 41.

⁴⁴ See *Catalogue of the First Exhibition, Society of American Artists at Kurtz Gallery, New York* (New York, 1878).

⁴⁵ Bienenstock, "The Formation and Early Years of the Society of American Artists," 47.

⁴⁶ Clarence Cook, "A New Art Departure," *New York Daily Tribune*, 9 March 1878, 5.

⁴⁷ [Charles de Kay], "The American Artists: New Paintings in the Exhibition," *New York Times*, 28 March 1878, 4.

⁴⁸ Eaton to Saint-Gaudens, 12 November 1877, Saint-Gaudens Papers, DCL, microfilm reel 5, frame 733. On the Palette Club, founded in 1869 by German artists, see Bienenstock, "The Formation and Early Years of the Society of American Artists," 42. The club's membership included cosmopolitan artists such as La Farge, Low, Ryder, Henry Mosler, and William Dannat.

⁴⁹ Eaton to Saint-Gaudens, 17 December 1877, Saint-Gaudens Papers, DCL, microfilm reel 5, frame 756.

⁵⁰ Bienenstock takes a different approach in "The Formation and Early Years of the Society of American Artists" (44), arguing that the Society showed a strong commitment to sculptors by already including two sculptors and comparing it to the number of academicians (5) and associates (1) at the National Academy.

⁵¹ Saint-Gaudens to Gilder, 16 November 1877, Saint-Gaudens Papers, DCL, microfilm reel 7, frame 491.

⁵² Saint-Gaudens to White, [March 1878] (copy), Saint-Gaudens Papers, DCL, microfilm reel 13, frame 887.

⁵³ Armstrong to Saint-Gaudens, 20 March 1878, Saint-Gaudens Papers, DCL, microfilm reel 1, frame 358.

⁵⁴ C[larence] C[ook], "American Artists. The Society's First Exhibition," *New York Daily Tribune*, 23 March 1878, 6.

⁵⁵ The exact date of Dolph's election to the Society is not documented, but he had resigned by 1884. See Bienenstock, "The Formation and Early Years of the Society of American Artists," 65 n. 97.

⁵⁶ "Fine Arts. First Exhibition of the Society of American Artists," *New York Herald*, 5 March 1878, 10.

⁵⁷ [Earl Shinn], "Fine Arts: The Lessons of a Late Exhibition," *Nation* 26 (11 April 1878): 251. Roberts and Shinn traveled together to Europe in 1866.

⁵⁸ [De Kay], *New York Times*, 28 March 1878, 4.

⁵⁹ *Catalogue of the Fifty-third Annual Exhibition of the National Academy of Design, 1878* (New York, 1878), "Sculptor Room," 38-39, nos. 717-747.

⁶⁰ "The Academy of Design: Opening of the Fifty-third Annual Exhibition," *New York Evening Post*, 30 March 1878, 4; and F[rancis] G. L[athrop], "Fine Arts: National Academy of Design," *New York Mail*, 1 April 1878, 4. Cook criticized the limitations of viewing the sculpture in a room "where half of it cannot be seen for the light, and the other half cannot be seen for the want of light." See C[larence] C[ook], "Art at the Academy. The Fifty-third Annual Exhibition," *New York Daily Tribune*, 2 April 1878, 5. David Dearing, Chief Curator, National Academy of Design, kindly explained the layout of the gallery spaces in the Academy building in conversation, May 14, 2001.

⁶¹ Bienenstock, "The Formation and Early Years of the Society of American Artists," 42, notes that of the twenty-two Society members, only three, including Saint-Gaudens, did not exhibit at the Academy.

⁶² The *Daily Graphic* allowed that they were "technically good." See "Figure Paintings Described. Notable Paintings in the Society of American Artists Exhibition," *New York Daily Graphic*, 6 March 1878, 35.

⁶³ This is borne out in an overview of the criticism, and succinctly stated in "Academy Notes," *New York Evening Post*, 20 April 1878, 2. The article also mentions that O'Donovan's bronze bust of Page was removed from the sculpture room and placed in a primary gallery, reminiscent of the relocation of his bust of Thomas LeClear during the contentious 1877 annual. See also David B. Dearing, ed., *Rave Reviews: American Art and Its Critics, 1826-1925*, exh. cat. (New York: National Academy of Design, 2000), 224, for Dearing's evaluation of Page's appearance in the 1878 annual.

⁶⁴ On critical response to the 1878 annual generally, see Conrads, *Winslow Homer and the Critics*, 130-31.

⁶⁵ C[larence] C[ook], "Fine Arts. National Academy of Design. Fifty-third Annual Exhibition. II," *New York Daily Tribune*, 9 April 1878, 2.

⁶⁶ [George Sheldon], "American Art. The Fifty-third Annual Exhibition of the National Academy of Design. III," *New York Evening Post*, 4 May 1878, 1.

⁶⁷ [Charles de Kay], "The Academy Exhibition. The Sculpture Room," *New York Times*, 20 May 1878, 5.

⁶⁸ William J. Clark, Jr., *Great American Sculptures* (Philadelphia: Gebbie and Barrie, 1878). Clark was a critic for the *Daily Evening Telegraph* in Philadelphia.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 43.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 44.

⁷¹ S. G. W. Benjamin, "Sculpture in America," *Harper's New Monthly Magazine* 58 (April 1879): 657-72. This article was later published as Chapter 5 in Benjamin's *Art in America: A Critical and Historical Sketch* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1880). Benjamin was born in Greece, the son of an American missionary, and graduated from Williams College in 1859. Benjamin's critical identity does not rest with any one publication for he free-lanced for several journals including *Harper's New Monthly Magazine*, the *Art Journal*, and the *American Art Review*. In 1881 Benjamin was named American editor for the London-based *Magazine of Art*, a position he held through the following year. Although best-known as a writer, Benjamin was also a marine painter who displayed his paintings at the National Academy of Design from 1878 to 1882. Between 1883 and 1885, he served as the first American minister to Persia. See *Dictionary of American Biography*, s.v. "Benjamin, Samuel Greene Wheeler;" and S. G. W. Benjamin, *The Life and Adventures of a Free Lance* (Burlington, Vt.: Free Press Company, 1914).

⁷² *Ibid.*, 657.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, 670.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

⁷⁵ *Ibid.* The illustration is on p. 672.

⁷⁶ "The Society of American Artists. I," *New York World*, 8 March 1879, 4.

⁷⁷ "The American Artists. Varnishing Day of the Second Exhibition," *New York Times*, 8 March 1879, 5, noted "a small but very interesting exhibit of bronze bas-reliefs and statuettes is placed in the centre of the gallery, and contain specimens of the work of St. Gaudens, O'Donovan, and Olin Warner."

⁷⁸ *Society of American Artists, Catalogue of the Second Exhibition, 1879* (New York, 1879), 12-13, nos. 148-60, 163, and 164. Saint-Gaudens's six works were catalogued as two entries, nos. 158 and 159.

⁷⁹ See George Gurney, "Olin Levi Warner: A Catalogue Raisonné of His Sculpture and Graphic Works" (Ph.D. diss., University of Delaware, 1978), 368-72; and Thayer Tolles, ed. *American Sculpture in The Metropolitan Museum of Art. Volume 1. A Catalogue of Works by Artists Born before 1865* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1999), 206-8. Noted collector Ichabod T. Williams, a business associate of the gallery owner Daniel Cottier, lent *Twilight* to the exhibition.

⁸⁰ "Fine Arts: The Society of American Artists," *New York Daily Graphic*, 8 March 1879, 56-57. The illustration confirms that the version of the *Cary* portrait shown at the Society was the one in which the sitter does not wear a hat.

¹¹ Articles preceding the opening of the Society's exhibition suggest that Saint-Gaudens submitted just three works, rather than the six indicated in the catalogue. See "Fine Arts: The Exhibition of the Society of American Artists," *New York Daily Graphic*, 15 February 1879, 722, which lists works selected by the Paris-based jury including "three medallion portraits by Augustus Saint-Gaudens"; and "Fine Arts: Society of American Artists—How Some Men Will be Represented," *New York Herald*, 3 March 1879, 8. If there were more than three, among the possible reliefs in Saint-Gaudens's oeuvre completed by spring 1879 were: *William G. Bunce* (1877; Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art, Hartford, Conn.); *George W. Maynard* (1877; Century Association, New York); *William L. Picknell* (1878; Museum of Fine Arts, Boston); *Andrew F. Bunner* (1878; Saint-Gaudens National Historic Site); *Charles McKim* (1878; The Metropolitan Museum of Art); and *Francis D. Millet* (1879; The Metropolitan Museum of Art).

¹² The inscription on the relief states that it is a gift from Cary to his son Trumbull, suggesting that it was a commission. See John Dryfhout and Beverly Cox, *Augustus Saint-Gaudens: The Portrait Reliefs*, exh. cat. (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution for the National Portrait Gallery, 1969), n.p., no. 14.

¹³ See John H. Dryfhout, *The Work of Augustus Saint-Gaudens* (Hanover, N.H.: University Press of New England, 1982), 92, no. 72; and Maitland Armstrong, *Day Before Yesterday*, 266.

¹⁴ The bronze version is unlocated. See Dryfhout, *The Work of Augustus Saint-Gaudens*, 101, no. 81. Her husband Chester W. Chapin later secured for Saint-Gaudens the commission for *The Puritan (Deacon Samuel Chapin)* (1883-86) in Springfield, Massachusetts.

¹⁵ For negative reaction to *The Gross Clinic*, see, for instance, S. N. Carter, "Exhibition of the Society of American Artists," *Art Journal* (New York) 5 (May 1879): 156, which called the painting "a degradation of Art."

¹⁶ Bienenstock, "The Formation and Early Years of the Society of American Artists," 75.

¹⁷ "Art Notes: The American Society of Artists," *New York Commercial Advertiser*, 13 March 1879, 1. The *Commercial Advertiser* among the most conservative of the New York dailies and its lukewarm response to European-based art styles reflects this leaning. See Margaret C. Conrads, "Winslow Homer and His Critics in the 1870s" (Ph.D. diss., City University of New York, 1999), 34-35.

¹⁸ [Clarence Cook], "The Society of American Artists. Second Annual Exhibition," *New York Daily Tribune*, 22 March 1879, 5.

¹⁹ "Fine Arts: Second Exhibition of the Society of American Artists," *New York Herald*, 24 March 1879, 8. See also Bienenstock, "The Formation and Early Years of the Society of American Artists," 85.

⁹⁰ "Culture and Progress: The Art Season of 1878-9 . . . The Society of American Artists," *Scribner's Monthly* 18 (June 1879): 312; and *New York Daily Graphic*, 8 March 1879, 58.

⁹¹ "Society of American Artists. The Second Exhibition on Varnishing Day," *New York Evening Mail*, 8 March 1879, 1. Similarly, the *Art Interchange* reported: "There are some excellent medallions by Warner, St. Gaudens, and W. R. O'Donovan." See "The Studio. The Society of American Artists," *Art Interchange* 2 (19 March 1879): 42.

⁹² "The Society of American Artists. I," *New York World*, 8 March 1879, 4. This article may have been authored by William C. Brownell.

⁹³ Carter, *Art Journal* 5 (May 1879): 157-58.

⁹⁴ [Clarence Cook], "The Society of American Artists. Second Annual Exhibition—Varnishing Day," *New York Daily Tribune*, 8 March 1879, 5.

⁹⁵ This measurement is taken from Dryfhout, *The Work of Augustus Saint-Gaudens*, 96, no. 76.

⁹⁶ *Reminiscences*, 1:162; and Dryfhout, *The Work of Augustus Saint-Gaudens*, 32. La Farge had seen casts of fifteenth-century reliefs in Saint-Gaudens's New York studio.

⁹⁷ *Explication des ouvrages de peinture, sculpture . . . Société des Artistes Français, Salon de 1880* (Paris: Imprimerie National, 1880), 622, nos. 6661-62.

⁹⁸ Lois Marie Fink, *American Art at the Nineteenth-Century Paris Salons* (Washington, D.C.: National Museum of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, in association with Cambridge University Press, 1990), 84.

⁹⁹ Saint-Gaudens to La Farge, 17 July 1877, quoted in *Reminiscences*, 1:191-92.

¹⁰⁰ See, for instance, Bion to Saint-Gaudens, 29 April 1881, original letter, Saint-Gaudens Papers, DCL. The English translation, at the Saint-Gaudens National Historic Site, Cornish, New Hampshire, reads: "The salon opens in two days. I'll give you the news. I can even send you some clippings if I remember. You can learn about it from a bulletin for your personal use which will keep you informed of all the things your wonderful reporters from your American papers ignore." Martha Knapp, Museum Specialist, Saint-Gaudens National Historic Site, Cornish, New Hampshire, kindly provided me with a set of the translated letters.

¹⁰¹ The Gruet foundry's first attempt to cast the piece in May 1880 had been unsuccessful; the second pouring occurred in June shortly before Saint-Gaudens returned to the United States.

¹⁰² *Explication des ouvrages de peinture, sculpture*, 622, no. 6662.

¹⁰³ Quoted in Louise Hall Tharp, *Saint-Gaudens and the Gilded Era* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1969), 142. See also Fink, *American Art at the Nineteenth-Century Paris Salons*, 140.

¹⁰⁴ Saint-Gaudens to Thomas J. Homer, 3 June 1880, Saint-Gaudens Papers, DCL, microfilm reel 17, frames 452-53.

¹⁰⁵ "Pictures of the Salon," *New York Times*, 4 July 1880, 2.

¹⁰⁶ Émile Michel, "Le Salon de 1880," *Revue des Deux Mondes* 39 (15 June 1880): 927; translated in Burke Wilkinson, *Uncommon Clay: The Life and Works of Augustus Saint-Gaudens* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1985), 102, 392 n. 13.

¹⁰⁷ Kenyon Cox, "Augustus Saint Gaudens," *Century Magazine* 38 (November 1887): 28.

¹⁰⁸ Henry Blackburn, ed. *Grovesnor Notes, 1880 . . . Summer Exhibition* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1880), 63-64, nos. 304-6 (*Millet, Bastien-Lepage, Gilder, Picknell, Armstrong, and Cary*).

¹⁰⁹ Lois Goldreich Marcus, "Studies in Nineteenth-Century American Sculpture: Augustus Saint-Gaudens (1848-1907)" (Ph.D. diss., City University of New York, 1979), 57. Marcus cites a review of the exhibition by the French critic Paul Leroi, "Les Expositions de la Société Donatello de Florence," *L'Art/ Revue Hebdomadaire Illustré* 4 (1880): 265-72.

¹¹⁰ *Society of American Artists: Catalogue of the Third Exhibition, 1880* (New York, 1880).

¹¹¹ Bienenstock, "The Formation and Early Years of the Society of American Artists," 93-97.

¹¹² Sargent's *Carolus-Duran* was not included among the 162 objects in the catalogue, but it was displayed. For critical reaction to the painting when it was exhibited in New York, see Marc Simpson, with Richard Ormond and H. Barbara Weinberg, *Uncanny Spectacle: The Public Career of the Young John Singer Sargent*, exh. cat. (New Haven and London: Yale University Press; Williamstown, Mass.: Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute, 1997), 85.

¹¹³ "Society of American Artists. Opening of the Third Annual Exhibition This Afternoon," *New York Evening Post*, 15 March 1880, 4; and E[arl] S[hinn], "Fine Arts: The Society of American Artists," *Nation* 30 (1 April 1880): 258. See also S. G. W. Benjamin, "The Exhibitions. IV. Society of American Artists. Third Exhibition," *American Art Review* 1 (April 1880): 262, which affirms "but whatever praise may be given to the pictures, there is after all nothing better in the exhibition than the sculptures."

Lastly, writing for the *Art Journal*, Susan N. Carter commented: "The statuary in exhibitions generally attracts much less notice than the pictures, but in the American Artists' collection several of these works seem to us the best things to be seen there." See S. N. Carter, "II. The Society of American Artists," *Art Journal* (New York) 6 (May 1880): 156.

¹¹⁴ [Charles de Kay], "Varnishing Day Scenes. The Society of American Artists," *New York Times*, 16 March 1880, 5, notes "the Miner Gallery shows off the average picture better from every part of the floor than a larger hall. It is long and narrow, and at first sight appears to afford less space for pictures than at the Kurtz Gallery. A small room at one end serves also as a place for the sculpture. . . . Two pieces of sculpture occupy important positions near the two extremities of the gallery. . . . In the doorway leading to the small room is the marble bust of Theodore Dwight Woolsey. . . . At the bottom of the gallery stands a plaster bust of the painter Weir." It should be noted that Cook found the placement of Saint-Gaudens's marble unfortunate. He questioned: "Does anybody suppose the Academy is so stupid that it would not have welcomed such a genuine piece of sculpture as Mr. Olin Warner's bust of Alden Weir, or Mr. St. Gaudens's 'President Woolsey'! And had they accepted Mr. St. Gaudens's beautiful work they could not have placed it so unjustly and with such ingenious badness as the friends of Mr. St. Gaudens have done." See "Fine Arts. National Academy of Design. Fifty-fifth Annual Exhibition," *New York Daily Tribune*, 4 April 1880, 7.

¹¹⁵ [Clarence Cook], "Society of American Artists. The Coming Exhibition," *New York Daily Tribune*, 16 March 1880, 5.

¹¹⁶ M. G. Van Rensselaer, "Spring Exhibitions and Picture-Sales in New York.—I," *American Architect and Building News* 7 (1 May 1880): 191.

¹¹⁷ Warner and Weir were both charter members of the Society of American Artists, elected on June 4 and October 22, respectively. By 1880, both artists occupied studios in the Benedick Building on Washington Square, a locus for artists, among them Ryder and Wyatt Eaton. Weir's portrait of Warner (1879-80; American Academy of Arts and Letters, New York) was executed concurrently with Warner's bust of Weir. For the *Weir* bust, see Gurney, "Olin Levi Warner," 437-46; and Tolles, ed., *American Sculpture in The Metropolitan Museum of Art. Volume 1*, 213-15.

¹¹⁸ [De Kay], *New York Times*, 16 March 1880, 5.

¹¹⁹ Van Rensselaer, *American Architect and Building News* 7 (1 May 1880): 191.

¹²⁰ Benjamin, *American Art Review* 1 (April 1880): 262.

¹²¹ S[hinn], *Nation* 30 (1 April 1880): 258; and "Art for Artists," *Art Amateur* 2 (April 1880): 91.

¹²² The *Herald* allowed that the *Weir* was “lifelike and strongly individualized.” See “Fine Arts: Third Annual Exhibition of the Society of American Artists,” *New York Herald*, 16 March 1880, 6.

¹²³ “The Society of American Artists,” *New York World*, 21 March 1880, 4.

¹²⁴ “Fine Arts: Society of American Artists,” *New York Daily Tribune*, 11 April 1880, 2.

¹²⁵ That Pierrepont from the start intended the portrait as a presentation gift is noted twice in his correspondence with Woolsey, in undated [March 1875] and June 22, 1875, letters in Woolsey Family Papers, Manuscripts and Archives, Sterling Library, Yale University.

¹²⁶ Saint-Gaudens to J[ames] L. Claghorn, President, Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, 7 January 1877, Archives, Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, Philadelphia.

¹²⁷ In a draft of a letter to Pierrepont, Saint-Gaudens wrote, “I have deferred having the bust of Pres. Woolsey executed in marble until I could get to Rome as here I could do it to the best advantage.” See draft, 28 February 1878, Saint-Gaudens Papers, DCL, microfilm reel 11, frame 649.

¹²⁸ Ibid., frames 649-50. The dimensions of the completed portrait are 29 ½ x 24 x 15 in. See Paula R. Freedman, *A Checklist of American Sculpture at Yale University* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Art Gallery, 1992), 152, no. 318.

¹²⁹ Saint-Gaudens to Pierrepont, 28 February 1878 (draft), microfilm reel 11, frame 650.

¹³⁰ Saint-Gaudens wrote Gilder: “All I have done besides [the *Farragut*] is finish the Woolsey myself, but I haven’t got it off yet and I mean to exhibit it at the AAA [American Art Association].” See Saint-Gaudens to Gilder, 29 December 1879, Richard Watson Gilder Papers, Manuscripts and Archives Division, New York Public Library, box 15.

¹³¹ See Saint-Gaudens to Edwards Pierrepont, [ca. early 1880] (draft), Saint-Gaudens Papers, DCL, microfilm reel 11, frames 651-52.

¹³² This observation is supported by such statements as Carter, *Art Journal* 6 (May 1880): 156: “Mr. St. Gaudens’s work has for several years been much admired, and its delicate loveliness is well shown in the heads of the angels on the altar at St. Thomas’s Church.”

¹³³ Saint-Gaudens to Pierrepont, [ca. early 1880] (draft), Saint-Gaudens Papers, DCL, microfilm reel 11, frames 651-52. Additionally Saint-Gaudens noted that he had spent more than \$700 on the translation of the portrait to marble “in my effort to make the work as good as I could.”

¹³⁴ *New York World*, 21 March 1880, 4.

¹³⁵ *New York Evening Post*, 15 March 1880, 4.

¹³⁶ [Clarence Cook], "Society of American Artists. The Coming Exhibition," *New York Daily Tribune*, 16 March 1880, 5. Cook also noted: "Mr. St. Gaudens's half-length is in marble; it is a gift to Yale College, we believe, by a private gentleman, whose name is modestly concealed by being inscribed in a sort of cuneiform character on a bronze plate attached to the pedestal." The inscription reads: VIRO ILLVSTRI IN HONOREM HANC EFFIGIEM FACIENDAM CVRAVIT ET COLLEGIO YALENSI DONO DEDIT EDWARDSIVS PIERREPONT DISCIPVLVS MICVS MAGISTRVM SVVM OLIM ET ADHVC VALDE AMIRANS A S^{TVS} GAVDENS FACIEBAT. Saint-Gaudens requested that Pierrepont provide two possible inscriptions, one long and one short, for the pedestal. See Saint-Gaudens to Pierrepont, 28 February 1878 (draft), Saint-Gaudens Papers, DCL, microfilm reel 11, frame 650.

¹³⁷ Van Rensselaer, *American Architect and Building News* 7 (1 May 1880): 191.

¹³⁸ S[hinn], *Nation* 30 (1 April 1880): 258.

¹³⁹ *New York World*, 21 March 1880, 4.

¹⁴⁰ "Culture and Progress: The Art Season. Society of American Artists," *Scribner's Monthly* 20 (June 1880): 314.

¹⁴¹ [De Kay], *New York Times*, 16 March 1880, 5.

¹⁴² *New York World*, 21 March 1880, 4.

¹⁴³ [De Kay], *New York Times*, 16 March 1880, 5. Warner's portrait of Weir, according to de Kay, differed since it was not a commission: "There has been no attempt here to indulge in the 'picturesque,' perhaps because the sculptor has been free, while modeling a brother artist, to follow his own instincts. . . . The eye is not carried aside or deceived by any accessory, drapery, or fillet in the hair, or even an elaborate pedestal." Interestingly, however, Susan N. Carter implied that picturesqueness implied a work's degree of finish. She found the *Weir* contained "an artistic and picturesque completeness, which removes it from the condition of being only a study." See Carter, *Art Journal* 6 (May 1880): 156.

¹⁴⁴ Charles de Kay to Richard Watson Gilder, March 22, 1880, Richard Watson and Helena de Kay Gilder Papers, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C., microfilm reel 285, frame 167.

¹⁴⁵ [Charles de Kay], "A Plea for Finish in Art," *New York Times*, 17 March 1878, 6. De Kay had addressed this issue at length ten days earlier in "Society of American Artists," *New York Times*, 7 March 1878, 4.

¹⁴⁶ S. G. W. Benjamin, "Tendencies of Art in America," *American Art Review* 1 (January 1880): 106.

¹⁴⁷ The variation in O'Donovan's technical approaches was discussed at length in "The Academy Sculptors," *New York Evening Post*, 26 April 1879, 1. The writer, an advocate for the sculptor's more polished work, observed: "It was incomprehensible that Mr. O'Donovan should have abandoned his faith in the value of the artistic qualities that shown in the Page bust [exhibited in the 1878 annual]—precisely the qualities that do not shine in the Society of American Artists 'busts.'"

¹⁴⁸ Will H. Low, *A Painter's Progress* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1910), 215.

¹⁴⁹ Bienenstock, "The Formation and Early Years of the Society of American Artists," 92. For O'Donovan, she uses the example of his submissions to the 1879 Academy and Society annuals: to the former a detailed and realistic portrait bust of Robert Swain Gifford (1879; Century Association, New York) and to the latter a loose, painterly portrait relief of Bayard Taylor (1879; Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University, New Haven, Conn.).

¹⁵⁰ Only one sculpture was exhibited at the Society prior to 1880 under such a title. In 1879, Theodore Baur submitted his *Drunken Silenus, Sketch in Plaster*, which escaped critical commentary. See *Society of American Artists: Catalogue of the Second Exhibition, 1879* (New York, 1879), 12, no. 152.

¹⁵¹ *New York Evening Post*, 15 March 1880, 4. O'Donovan also received general positive notice in "Society of American Artists' Exhibition," *Art Interchange* 4 (31 March 1880): 59; *New York Herald*, 16 March 1880, 6; and Benjamin, *American Art Review* 1 (April 1880): 262.

¹⁵² *Art Amateur* 2 (April 1880): 91.

¹⁵³ *New York World*, 21 March 1880, 4.

¹⁵⁴ See, for instance, "Fine Arts: Society of American Artists—Third and Concluding Notice," *New York Herald*, 12 April 1880, 5. The five reliefs exhibited by Warner were portraits of W. B. Duncan, W. F. Mills, Mrs. W. W. Walker, Thomas Fenton, and Reverend and Mrs. Levi Warner. On these medallions, see Gurney, "Olin Levi Warner," 389-90, 392-94, and 431-36; and Tolles, ed., *American Sculpture in The Metropolitan Museum of Art. Volume 1*, 208-13.

¹⁵⁵ S[hinn], *Nation* 30 (1 April 1880): 258.

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁷ [De Kay], *New York Times*, 16 March 1880, 5.

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁹ "Artistic Incompletion: The Third Annual Exhibition of the Society of American Artists," *Evening Post*, clipping annotated April 21, 1880, in Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts Papers, Archives of American Art, microfilm reel P53, frame 256.

Chapter 4

Genius Publicized: 1881-1886

In July 1880 Saint-Gaudens returned from Paris to the United States. While his wife went to her family's home in Boston to await the September 28 birth of their son Homer, Saint-Gaudens established himself in New York. He rented a studio in the recently completed Sherwood Studio Building at Sixth Avenue and Fifty-seventh Street, a building that rapidly became a gathering point for cosmopolitan foreign-trained artists to work and socialize (the sculptor moved his studio to 148 West Thirty-sixth Street in May 1881, a location that served as his principal workspace until 1897).¹ Saint-Gaudens's son Homer later described the sculptor's tenure at the Sherwood as "the culmination of his struggle to establish himself permanently in the ranks of mature artists."² These early years of the 1880s were a busy period that the sculptor termed one of "distressing confusion."³ In 1881 his French friend Paul Bion aptly called Saint-Gaudens "a sort of 'Edisson' [sic] of sculpture," who was "drowning in work . . . combining, constructing, producing treasure on treasure."⁴

As much as inner-circle journalists labored on Saint-Gaudens's behalf to promote his critical reputation, he gained equal advantage in securing joint commissions through connections with such artists and architects as Henry Hobson Richardson, John La Farge, and Stanford White. Saint-Gaudens worked on several projects with Richardson for the Ames family: a stone mantelpiece (1880-81) for the Ames Gate Lodge in North Easton, Massachusetts; a bronze relief of Oliver Ames (1881/90) set in a sandstone fireplace of Richardson's design for the Ames Free Public Library in North Easton; and

commemorative relief portraits of Oliver II and Oakes Ames (1881-82) set in a pyramidal granite monument commissioned by Union Pacific Railroad for Sherman Summit near Laramie, Wyoming.⁵ Through La Farge, Saint-Gaudens was commissioned by architect George Browne Post to complete decorative work on the entrance hall and dining room in the new Fifth Avenue mansion of Cornelius Vanderbilt II, work he undertook between 1881 and 1883. In collaboration with White, the sculptor also continued modeling three nine-foot angels in classicizing drapery for the Edwin D. Morgan family tomb for Cedar Hill Cemetery, in Hartford, Connecticut. Unfortunately, the shed in which the roughed-out stone angels were stored was destroyed by fire on August 26, 1884. Saint-Gaudens abandoned the project after recouping partial payment.⁶ He also completed a series of commissioned bas-relief portraits, following up on the successful stylistic innovations of those executed in Paris as gifts of friendship or artistic camaraderie, but now enjoyed the benefit of added income.⁷ However, the most important event following his return was the May 1881 unveiling of the *Admiral David Glasgow Farragut Monument*.

The *Farragut Monument*

Saint-Gaudens spent his first few months back in the United States foremost occupied with the completion and installation of the bronze *Farragut* statue and the modeling and carving of reliefs for its bluestone base. His return and the impending dedication of the *Farragut* (fig. 27), which had been cast in Paris by the Gruet foundry, were topics of ongoing interest in the press, underscoring the anticipation surrounding the sculptor's effort, at least in art circles. While in France, Saint-Gaudens had attempted to control

from afar published notices concerning the aesthetics and appearance of the monument as well as the circumstances of its completion, preferring to let anticipation build until the unveiling. His desire for privacy was a pattern he followed in subsequent monumental commissions as well, as his wife reported to her mother:

Mr. Ryan of the New York Herald sat next [to] Aug. He is an Irishman & said "whiniver you want a notice of your statue just let me know." It's awfully funny how all the newspaper & magazine men are after the statue to have illustrated articles &c &c. . . but Aug doesn't want anything printed in any forum about it. He has kept quiet from the beginning—Scribner's & Harper have written him & want it photo'd will bear expenses &c.⁸

The sculptor's efforts to downplay buzz and regulate information during 1880 and 1881, however, were largely futile. An announcement in the *Art Journal*, puffing Saint-Gaudens's reputation, offers evidence: "Mr. Augustus St. Gaudens is coming home, after acquiring fame in Paris. His sculptures in St. Thomas's Church, and at the recent exhibitions of the Society of American Artists entitle him to high rank in New York also. He brings with him his large statue of Admiral Farragut."⁹ The *American Architect and Building News* reported in late July 1880 that the bronze sculpture would soon arrive on American shores and that the site was undecided, although it would likely be in Central Park.¹⁰ The short-lived *American Art Review* noted in August that Saint-Gaudens "has lately returned from Europe," bringing with him the *Farragut* to be erected in Madison Square.¹¹ The site in fact was not finally settled on until later that fall.

Over the following months, newspapers and journals diligently charted the particulars of the sculpture's acceptance by the parks commissioners despite Saint-Gaudens's exertions to keep the story out of the press. This course of events has been traced in other scholarship on Saint-Gaudens¹² and will only be briefly discussed in context of his artistic reputation. Initially, he expected that the sculpture would be

dedicated in October 1880, soon after his return from Paris. However, complications with the finishing and acceptance of the pedestal, as well as the siting of the monument and disposition of surrounding paths, prevented its unveiling until the following May.¹³ Of particular concern was the unique design of Saint-Gaudens and White's high-backed bench/pedestal: semicircular flanking wings with bas-reliefs of allegorical personifications of Courage and Loyalty on either end. The parks commissioners preferred a granite plinth of traditional classical proportions, as they required for all public sculptures, and delayed approval of the monument, thereby postponing its dedication. Several publications defended Saint-Gaudens's case, arguing that a sculpture that had been well received in Paris was certainly good enough for New York. The *Art Journal* offers a case in point:

Whether or not [the parks commissioners] will insist upon their preference in spite of the earnest and repeated protestations of the sculptor, no one can tell, but, considering the fact that the statue has been praised most enthusiastically in France, where it was exhibited at the last *Salon*, and that it bids fair to be a credit to the city and to the Park Commissioners themselves, the matter of the pedestal might be left to the artist's judgment, especially since his work is without cost to any one but himself.¹⁴

A well-informed editorial in the *New York Times*, presumably written by Charles de Kay, also leveled charges of American cultural provincialism in matters of artistic taste:

The statue won the admiration of both the critical and the general public of Paris, and received a gold [sic] medal at the great Exposition. The work, however, is not only a statue, but a monument. . . . The Farragut statue, which has been greeted with a chorus of delight by the whole artistic world, is the work of Mr. ST. GAUDENS, of this City, one of our few sculptors who have a European reputation. . . . It would be strange and deplorable if a work of art which is so much admired by those whose opinions in such matters is most valuable, and which has the distinction of being, even in its minutest detail, the production of men born and bred in New-York, (in which respect it stands alone,) should also be distinguished by the singular misfortune of being rejected by those who act for New-York in the matter of public decoration. This would be a sad verification of the adage that a prophet is not without honor save in his own country and among

his own kindred. It is to be hoped that the commission will add to its reputation by accepting this fine work in its entirety, as it has been conceived and executed.¹⁵

Finally, in November 1880, with the controversy well-exposed by the press, the commissioners consented to the unique pedestal design. Its carving, carried out by the New York firm of Fisher and Bird, preceded during the winter and spring of 1881 under Saint-Gaudens's constant supervision. The statue was not put in place on the pedestal until the day before its dedication.

Scholars have traditionally assessed the unveiling of the *Farragut* on May 25, 1881, and the ensuing critical response to the work as a defining moment in the history of American sculpture and in Saint-Gaudens's emergence as the leading American sculptor of the late nineteenth century.¹⁶ I both accept and challenge the assertion that the *Farragut* was "the beginning of a new era," as Lorado Taft noted in his important *History of American Sculpture* in 1903.¹⁷ Indeed the monument and the widespread publicity it generated represent a significant turning point, yet I also contend that Saint-Gaudens was both established and highly esteemed by genteel New York prior to the dedication of the *Farragut* as de Kay's editorial infers. Saint-Gaudens's role in the decoration of Saint Thomas Church and his own estimation of its significance in his career and the critical response have to this point been undervalued. But unlike Saint Thomas, the *Farragut* empowered the thirty-three-year-old artist as an independent and *monumental* sculptor, the major sculptural talent of the era. It expanded his reputation beyond the limited social, artistic, and journalistic circles of New York to an emerging national awareness. It further marked a turning point in his career; his son described the moment as putting "a period to one allotment of 'the toughness that pervades a sculptor's life.'" ¹⁸ As Marc Simpson has observed in the context of John Singer Sargent's early portraits: "A truly successful work

was currency in the purchase of a reputation; the more it was seen the more it was worth."¹⁹ Likewise, the *Farragut*, always on public view, yielded Saint-Gaudens incalculable return on his investment.

The unveiling of the *Farragut*, attended by a throng of 10,000 on a sunny May afternoon in the northwest corner of Madison Square, generated considerable coverage in the local newspapers as well as art and general-interest periodicals.²⁰ The prevailing response was highly positive; indeed the *Critic* noted in June: "There has been little or no public expression of dissatisfaction."²¹ Mariana Griswold Van Rensselaer found the press's efforts to promote the monument unprecedented: "Seldom has there been so much said in the way of technical criticisms of a public monument. Seldom has the conscientious work of an artist been more conscientiously approved."²² Reviewers found pleasure in the unusual aesthetics of the new monument and sanctioned its divergent character. Much was made of Saint-Gaudens's and White's unique setting—a raised platform area onto which the bluestone exedra was set and fronted by a pebbled pavement—carefully planned so that the viewer, in a discreet viewing environment, looked up at the windblown admiral in bronze. The *Herald's* critic, observing that the innovative monument would generate critical discussion for some time to come, had "no hesitation in declaring [it] to be the most noble piece of combined architecture and sculpture of its kind in the country."²³

The symbiotic relationship between the statue and the absolutely original base with stylized wave lines created what may be called a marine environment, "redolent of the sea."²⁴ The original character of the base, with its low-relief passages, appealed to the writer for the *Critic*, who recognized the novelty and richness of Saint-Gaudens's style,

previously only expertly imparted in his small medallions: "Mr. St. Gaudens has evidently made a special study of the art of modelling in low relief. He already has had imitators in this branch of sculpture in both France and America; but we fear that none who have imitated his work will have yet discovered his secret—no secret at all . . . except that of a well-trained eye and hand, and of a highly cultivated taste."²⁵ The *Tribune*'s writer, almost certainly Clarence Cook, put forth a popularly accepted notion—that the pedestal was not a wave but a ship: "The statue of Farragut stands erect upon her victorious prow."²⁶ De Kay, always particularly sensitive to issues concerning public art, also saluted the collaboration between Saint-Gaudens and White and the novelty of the result. He defended the four years it took to complete the monument, "the result of intelligent co-operation of the two professions which ought never to be disassociated—sculpture and architecture."²⁷ From this point forward, Saint-Gaudens and White's collaborative monumental work—namely the *Standing Lincoln*, *The Puritan*, and the *Adams Memorial*—was largely above contemporary critical reproach.²⁸ De Kay and many of his fellow critics would continue to foster this collaborative spirit between architects, sculptors, painters, and decorators in their writings and through their own involvement in civic projects and organizations.

The press quickly sanctioned the unveiling of the *Farragut* as a turning point in the history of American sculpture. Previewing the monument five days before its dedication, the writer for the *Herald*, clearly intimate with Saint-Gaudens and the sculpture itself, devoted considerable discussion to the history of the statue's production and its exhibition in Paris, deferring critical analysis until its unveiling. The praise that the *Farragut* was accorded at the Salon by "competent French critics" led this *Herald*

critic to predict: "We think we are not far wrong in expecting that the city will have in it one of its finest works of art, and the distinguished naval officer a memorial worthy both of his fame, and of what may justly be called the new school of American sculpture."²⁹

The *Critic*, a weekly recently hatched by Jeannette and Joseph Gilder, noted that the monument was "in the artistic sense, perhaps the most important that has ever been erected in this country."³⁰ So too agreed Cook, writing unusually cheerfully in the *Daily Tribune* that sculpture will be "generally accepted as one of the best works of its kind that our times have produced. . . . [It was] clearly the birth of a new time, it is a sign of better days for art, not only in our city, but in our country."³¹ De Kay of the *Times* asserted that New Yorkers now had a monument that provided a standard by which to judge sculpture: "With the Farragut of SAINT-GAUDENS begins the era when the criticism of sculpture for civic decorations will be as sharp and exacting as it now is in painting."³²

The monument's frankly heroic realism and expert projection of "American" character also attracted critics eager to define and advocate for national uniqueness in their art. Writing for the *Nation*, William C. Brownell found "most conspicuous" the *Farragut*'s "thoroughly American character. . . . It is evidently modern work, a genuine reflection without classic reflections, and it is evidently not French or Italian or German."³³ The *Art Journal*, which analyzed the *Farragut* in the context of a sculpture-by-sculpture history of New York's "mediocre" monuments, observed the fact that it was made by an American was evident in the rendering of the admiral's face alone.³⁴ Indeed works that incorporated traces of classic and Renaissance principles, but reflected the dash of innovation and modernity most appealed to the critics' sense of Americanness.

The *Farragut*, dignified and individual, became their paradigm for monumental sculpture.

Although most discussion was given over to the appearance of the monument, some focus was paid to the sculptor, his reputation, and his unique talents. The *Herald* noted that Saint-Gaudens's previous work "has brought him a high reputation both at home and abroad."³⁵ De Kay in the *Times* ventured so far as to proclaim Saint-Gaudens in his decorative instincts a "genius," while the *Art Journal* proclaimed in his "genius," "he is a natural, a born sculptor."³⁶ Cook qualified him as "not of genius, but of extraordinary talent."³⁷ This labeling of Saint-Gaudens as "genius" fit into a larger critical trend of associating younger artists of talent with this quality, and in turn, saluting such individual "genius" as symptomatic of progress toward a national school of art. Further, the younger critics selectively recognized and proclaimed natural genius in order to promote their own status as refined tastemakers while at the same time forwarding the careers of their artist-friends.

The most significant and far-reaching coverage of the monument appeared in the June issue of *Scribner's Monthly*, where Richard Watson Gilder printed his most extensive accolade to Saint-Gaudens to date: "The Farragut Monument."³⁸ Gilder's words in this nationally-circulated journal radiated outward from New York and excerpts were republished in the Philadelphia *Times and News*, the Springfield (Mass.) *Republican*, and other local papers.³⁹ The article was the first in the issue and was handsomely illustrated with a pen sketch of the entire monument by Robert Blum (fig. 28) as well as details of the full-length figure, the pedestal bench, and the bronze crab inset in the pavement.

The contents of the article were carefully choreographed by Saint-Gaudens, White, and Gilder. In early April Saint-Gaudens had received a proof of the article from White for his approval and correction after the architect had reviewed it. The sculptor responded by thanking Gilder “for your very kind notice of my work and of myself but you have judged me in too favorable a standpoint.” He then insisted that part of a more personal reference be omitted and recommended a substitution, adding “I feel very strongly in regard to it and should be very disappointed if the alteration were not made.”⁴⁰ In collaborating on the final product, both Gilder and Saint-Gaudens had personal and professional agendas in mind. The artist of course wanted to control the flow of information about himself and the *Farragut* while the editor used the monument as a teaching tool to stress the potency of art in public places and its reformatory and moralizing potentials. A recent biographer aptly stated, “Gilder hoped that noble monuments, planted amidst the symbols of urban materialism, could inform the daily lives of Americans with beauty.”⁴¹ Such attempts by Gilder and his genteel confreres to educate and inspire the public in matters of aesthetic taste may be seen as lines of defense against postbellum industrialization and rapid urbanization.

As Knickerbocker New York’s elite cultural circles had contended since the early nineteenth century,⁴² Gilder maintained that a great metropolis should be adorned with great public sculpture. He opened his article with a lament about the sub-standard quality of New York’s public sculpture, noting that the organizing committees as well as the public were ill-educated in matters of taste, devoting energy to raising funds, but not to securing appropriate talent: “Public committees and individual donors have inflicted upon the city a still increasing company of hideous and imbecile monuments,—some home-

made and some imported,—the work in certain instances of well-known but half-educated and poorly endowed sculptors, and in others of nameless and shameless adventurers.”⁴³ Gilder expressed his hope that by improving public taste, the quality of monuments would improve. To him, Saint-Gaudens’s *Farragut* was a “work of extraordinary artistic value, . . . and a sign of the increase of the art spirit in America.”⁴⁴ It followed that the success and novelty of the *Farragut* were harbingers of greater appreciation for and understanding of this public art form and for properly trained American talent, even “genius”:

Let us hope that it marks the beginning of an era when we shall no longer import for our streets and parks the work of second-rate European sculptors, nor put commissions into the hands of Americans who have no claim whatever to the title of sculptor,—when we shall on all occasions choose, as in the present instance, artists not only of thorough education and training, but also of genius.⁴⁵

Gilder rightly observed that when Saint-Gaudens received the *Farragut* commission in December 1876, he was “young and accomplished, though then not widely known.”⁴⁶ The middle of the article was devoted to a survey of Saint-Gaudens’s career and to his education and stylistic inspirations, the most extended and high-profile to date. Noting that educational opportunities in New York for the sculptor were soon exhausted, Gilder discussed his time in France, surrounded by “the most severe, the most powerful, the most beautiful, the best, modern sculpture.” However, Gilder was quick to link Saint-Gaudens, one of the “original minds,” to a distinguished lineage that emanated from the acme of the plastic arts, ancient Greece. “Paris points to Rome, Rome to Athens,” he succinctly stated. While championing the stylistic tenets of Greek art and Saint-Gaudens’s affinity to these principles of humanistic naturalism, Gilder also deliberately tied him to Greece’s cultural successor, the Florentine Renaissance. The

Farragut, “in modeling severe, broad, yet minute in finish and modern in expression,—in character alert, eager, reticent, full of dignity and reserved force.—Saint-Gaudens’s bronze *Farragut* might almost be called the work of some new Donatello.”⁴⁷ Specifically Gilder was alluding to Donatello’s *Saint George* (1415-17; Museo Nazionale del Bargello, Florence) that served as the inspiration for *Farragut*’s pose. That Saint-Gaudens and his work were original, yet part of a great artistic continuum was an ongoing rallying cry in Gilder’s writings on the artist.

Van Rensselaer weighed in publicly on the *Farragut* in the September issue of *American Architect and Building News*, echoing many of Gilder’s points in her own elegant prose.⁴⁸ Like Gilder, she agreed that the *Farragut* stood as New York’s best public sculpture and had potential to instruct “a throng of passers-by” on aesthetic matters, especially with “offensive” sculptures like Randolph Rogers’s *William H. Seward* (1874-76) nearby in the park. Saint-Gaudens’s sculpture was “a monument in the strictest sense of the word, and, not a portrait-statue merely.”⁴⁹ Along those lines, she praised Saint-Gaudens’s and White’s collaboration on the pedestal and welcomed the departure from uniform bases on the city’s public sculptures.

Of Saint-Gaudens, Van Rensselaer wrote enthusiastically. Her assessment of his professional reputation was offered against the background of national progress in the arts and his aptness as a sculptor role model. Noting that the artist’s reputation had increased greatly between the awarding of the commission and dedication of the sculpture, she observed that until May the jury had still been out on his overall talent: “The works which he had produced were of a different sort . . . and it still remained doubtful whether he could successfully deal with a civic monument destined for the open

air.” He succeeded brilliantly, not the least because of the *Farragut*’s “strong national accent”: the sculpture incorporated technical ability, individualized realism, informed taste, and “pictorial style” to produce a work of national expression. These qualities were “absolutely indispensable,” Van Rensselaer wrote, “if our art is to become at all characteristic of ourselves, if it is to be anything more than an echo of foreign schools, a reproduction of foreign impressions.”⁵⁰ It is worth remembering that the union of technical command and “American” subject matter resulting in a uniquely national art was the theme that preoccupied the critics above all throughout late nineteenth century and beyond.

Society of American Artists, New York, 1881

Saint-Gaudens’s return to New York’s artistic community and his status within this circle rekindled his interest in participating in the management of the Society of American Artists. He served as the organization’s president during the 1880-81 season. His impending departure from Paris occasioned his election sometime during spring 1880, for when J. Alden Weir wrote to inform him of his new post, he noted, “we look forward to your coming back, as one does to spring.”⁵¹ The Society’s membership had swelled to fifty-six artists,⁵² but still included just four sculptors: Saint-Gaudens, Olin Levi Warner, William O’Donovan, and Theodore Baur. As president, Saint-Gaudens was a member of the exhibition committee responsible for the selection and hanging of works of art for the 1881 annual.⁵³ The fourth exhibition was held from March 28 to April 29, a time during which Saint-Gaudens was largely occupied with completing the reliefs *Courage* and

Loyalty for the *Farragut* pedestal in time for the May 25 unveiling. Of the 147 works on display at the Society, fourteen were sculptures,⁵⁴ including five by Saint-Gaudens and four by Warner. Daniel Chester French submitted two, and O'Donovan, Paul Wayland Bartlett and Hobart B. Jacobs one each. French, Bartlett, and Jacobs were all newcomers to the Society exhibition.

Four of the reliefs Saint-Gaudens exhibited at the 1881 Society annual may be identified as portraits of Jules Bastien-Lepage (fig. 29), Rodman de Kay Gilder, Dr. Henry Shiff, and the children of Prescott Hall Butler. The identity of the sitter for the fifth, a plaster medallion of a woman's head in profile, is not possible to determine.⁵⁵ Saint-Gaudens had previously exhibited the *Gilder*, *Shiff*, and *Bastien-Lepage* reliefs in November-December 1880 at the "Exhibition by Living American Artists," at the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston (discussed below).⁵⁶ From this display, the museum purchased the *Bastien-Lepage*, and at the time of this transaction, Saint-Gaudens negotiated for its inclusion in the Society's spring exhibition.⁵⁷

In 1881 no single sculpture emerged as the prevailing critical favorite, as Warner's *Weir* and Saint-Gaudens's *Woolsey* had the previous year. The submissions, as usual, were dominated by portraits, with the exceptions of the plaster statuette *Dancing Nymph* (1881; Smithsonian American Art Museum, Washington, D.C.), an ideal nude figure by Warner, and *Kid's Head in Bronze* (ca. 1877-80; Smithsonian American Art Museum), a study of a goat by young Paris-based Bartlett.⁵⁸ If one sculpture physically dominated the installation, it was Warner's classicizing portrait bust of the celebrated harpist Maud Morgan (fig. 30), which was placed in "the post of honor in a small draped alcove, and fully merits the position."⁵⁹ Collectively, however, Saint-Gaudens's reliefs

drew the most critical attention, foremost the *Bastien-Lepage*. It was advantageously placed next to the French painter's grand-scale canvas, *Joan of Arc* (fig. 31). The painting, a critical sensation at the 1880 Salon, had been purchased that summer by Weir, also a friend of Bastien-Lepage's, for Erwin Davis of New York.⁶⁰ Also installed contiguously was a wood engraving after Saint-Gaudens's *Bastien-Lepage* that was cut by Frederick Juengling for an article on the French painter for the June 1881 issue of *Scribner's Monthly*, the same issue that featured Gilder's article on the *Farragut*.⁶¹

Modeled in 1880, *Bastien-Lepage* was the last among Saint-Gaudens's reliefs depicting artist-friends completed in Paris.⁶² The ambitious portrait of the French painter, whom Saint-Gaudens had known since the late 1860s, announces the sculptor's technical and compositional mastery of the bas-relief format. Bastien-Lepage's profile pose facing left diverges from Saint-Gaudens's usual rightward orientation of the sitter. Similarly the half-length portrayal is also a departure from the sculptor's earlier Parisian shoulder-length reliefs. The palette and fan-like arrangement of the brushes in the artist's left hand and the single brush in his right are integral parts of the composition, commanding its lower third. The artist's pride in his profession is sensitively expressed through his erect posture, vibrant and assured gaze, and comfortable grasp of the tools of his trade. The Boston Museum cast has in its upper left corner a seated nude female figure, with VERITE inscribed beneath her, perhaps an allusion to the realism of Bastien-Lepage's paintings.⁶³ Saint-Gaudens was pleased by the portrait, as its recurrent presence in exhibitions attests—in Paris, Florence, London, and Boston in 1880, as well as New York and Chicago in 1881. According to his son Homer: "Yet none of the medallions my father then modeled satisfied him to the extent of that of Bastien-Lepage, both because he

believed the relief was as near perfection as he ever came, and because he was greatly interested in the rare combination of talent and vanity in his sitter."⁶⁴ Indeed, in this work, as in the best of Saint-Gaudens's portraits, one senses an infusion of the sitter's character and a recording of psychological expression.

Rodman de Kay Gilder (fig. 32), which was exhibited at the Society in colored plaster, is one of the artist's most technically daring sketch-like reliefs.⁶⁵ Saint-Gaudens began in September 1879—the date inscribed in the work—to extract this likeness from an ambitious portrait of Rodman and his parents Helena de Kay and Richard Watson Gilder (fig. 33). The multi-figure relief was modeled in Paris while the family was on an extended European sojourn from March 1879 until May 1880.⁶⁶ Saint-Gaudens continued to refine Rodman's portrait once back in New York and was pleased with the results of the sand casting done "on this side of the 'Pond.'"⁶⁷ The two-year-old's profile head, with fleshy cheeks and cascading locks, protrudes only slightly above the undulating field on which it seems to float. It was an exemplar of Saint-Gaudens's maxim: "Remember that your background is your atmosphere, and part of the composition, and that the composition should extend from edge to edge of the frame."⁶⁸ *Rodman de Kay Gilder* represents the apogee of the sculptor's experimentation with the sketch technique in bas-relief, so that in effect loosely modeled clay approximates the fluidity of painted pigment. The soft strands of hair are echoed by the wispy horizontal striations in the background that carry insinuations of an etching and effectively unite figure with ground. The accompanying lettering was reduced to a monogram and brief identifying inscription, and a cornice-like element runs along the upper edge. The sum of parts—portrait head, etched

background, lettering, and framing architectural moldings—is assimilated into a simple yet most refined statement.

Modeled in Paris in May 1880, *Dr. Henry Shiff* (fig. 34) presents Saint-Gaudens's expatriate American confidante facing right, again in extremely low relief.⁶⁹ The middle-aged sitter's hair, mustache, and full beard are modeled with fluid, painterly strokes, with the dash of an artist utterly in control of his medium. On the left side of the bronze, commanding nearly one-third of the composition is an extensive pseudo-Latin inscription in Saint-Gaudens's characteristic Roman lettering style punctuated by bullets. It references the friendship of the two men, which began in Rome, and Shiff's various interests: the smells of Rome, philosophy, fine arts, and more cryptically, feline types. A crouching toad fills the lower right corner, an allusion to Shiff's collection of Far Eastern bronze toads and frogs.⁷⁰ This decorative inscription is nearly as critical an element in the presentation of Shiff as the portrait itself. As in the case of *Bastien-Lepage*, the combination of incisive portrait, illuminating inscription, and individualized attributes, offers a window on to the sitter's personality. It unveils the dynamics of Saint-Gaudens's enduring relationship with Shiff, a man who in the sculptor's words, "on the whole . . . exerted a more powerful influence in forming what little character I have than any other man I have ever met."⁷¹

The last identifiable work shown was *The Children of Prescott Hall Butler* (fig. 35), modeled in Saint-Gaudens's Sherwood Building studio between October 1880 and March 1881.⁷² He exhibited it at the Society immediately upon completion. The father of the two boys depicted in this portrait was a prominent New York lawyer and a classmate of Charles McKim's at Harvard. Stanford White, then courting Mrs. Butler's younger

sister, Bessie Smith, arranged for Saint-Gaudens to model a portrait of the Butler's sons for the dining room overmantel of their new house in Saint James, Long Island, designed by McKim. A gift from White to Butler, as the inscription in the lower right corner indicates, the relief depicts Charles Stewart Butler and Lawrence Smith Butler, arm-in-arm with bodies posed forward and heads directed to their left. The boys, in Scottish Highland dress, are depicted at three-quarter length, their bodies terminated by a protruding shelf. In the upper left corner an endless interlocking ribbon is inscribed twice with a line from book 1 of Virgil's *Aeneid*, which translates as: "God will give an end to these also." Technically, this composition too is an exemplar of bas-relief sculpture. The figures, although overlapping, project forward only minimally. Occasionally the youth's figure is distinguished from the background by deeply cut outlines, but for the most part, edges blend smoothly into the ground.

Collectively, Saint-Gaudens's five submissions were a significant departure from the marble *Woolsey*, his sole work displayed in 1880. While the *Woolsey* was hailed as a paradigm of polished technique, Saint-Gaudens's bas-reliefs sent critics in an entirely different direction. As discussed earlier, the issue of exhibiting sketchy-style sculptures moved toward the forefront in the written criticism of the Society of American Artists in 1880. The matter reached a fever pitch in the 1881 show, and Saint-Gaudens's sculptures were at the epicenter of this debate. However, as analysis of the printed criticism of this annual attests, Saint-Gaudens's loosely finished bas-reliefs were all but unassailable from reprobation leveled at most other sculptors working in this manner. His immunity, I contend, is due to his capacity to forego imitative discipleship for creative maturity as revealed in the novel compositional format and projection of character in his reliefs and

the success of the *Farragut*. Even more significant were his close bonds with certain writers who granted him more latitude to experiment stylistically than they did with other sculptors. These arbiters of culture were dependent on Saint-Gaudens's works to expound on their ideals about artistic genius, expression, and the rise of a new American art.

At this juncture, Saint-Gaudens's own views about the issue of finish versus polish must be assessed. While critics had devoted much published consideration to this matter, especially in relation to paintings, Saint-Gaudens was more circumspect about the subject. His comment to Augusta Homer in 1875, discussed in Chapter 2, is revealing—only artists comprehended the significance of his unfinished sketches for larger works whereas the public expected more polished productions.⁷³ His only extended discussion of finish was set forth in a February 1881 letter to Gilder, shortly before the Society's opening:

There seems to be a current opinion that a thing to be good must be unfinished. . . . Great work has been produced in both ways, *cf.* Millet—and some of the Greeks were grand in the simple. . . . The finish or no finish has nothing to do in the classification of a work as good or bad—its character, regardless of that is the thing. For it's simply one of the means of expressing oneself, according to the temperament of the worker. . . . Perhaps I've told you all this before but it keeps coming across me and the current criticism of art in the newspapers in that direction irritates me so that I felt I had to let off steam or explode.⁷⁴

In this personal manifesto, Saint-Gaudens argued that the quality of a work of art be judged on its character or effect, rather than on its degree of technical completion. His reference to Jean-François Millet, a critical role model for American artists, alludes to the popularity of the more suggestive Barbizon school aesthetic, especially in Boston where William Morris Hunt promoted it through his paintings, teachings, and writings.⁷⁵ Saint-Gaudens's philosophy echoed that outlined by Cook several years earlier in which Cook argued that finish and polish were not one and the same: "'finish' implies, first of all, that

a man shall know thoroughly what he is going to tell us. . . . Then he must know how to stop the very minute he has said all he had to say.”⁷⁶ Completeness to Cook, who it will be remembered vociferously supported Saint-Gaudens’s sketch submission to the 1877 National Academy annual, referred to the desired effect or spirit, an anti-Ruskinian departure from emphasis on verisimilitude and laborious detail. This was a major turn of tail for Cook who had been a devoted Ruskinian partisan in the 1860s but had revised his thinking after a stint as the *Tribune*’s correspondent in Paris.⁷⁷ Saint-Gaudens too believed a painting or sculpture should not be elevated by its state of incompleteness, nor did it have to reach a point of belabored smoothness or detail to be worthy. Taken a step further, he condoned each manner of working, yet to Gilder he cautioned against rote mimicry of faddish styles.

This phenomenon of imitation, not innovation, had previously set the tone for the criticism about paintings shown at the Society annuals, but in 1881 a sea change occurred, the background against which the writing on sculpture that year must be assessed. While the painted work shown in the three previous annuals was dominated by a sketchy handling of form, dark palette, and “poetic” subject matter, the paintings in the 1881 exhibition collectively represented a departure toward a more colorful and decorative aesthetic. William Merritt Chase and his Munich-trained followers led this transformation. Chase’s *Interior of the Artist’s Studio* (1880; Saint Louis Art Museum), a depiction of the artist and a lady visitor seated in bric-a-brac-filled studio, exemplifies this new trend. S. G. W. Benjamin’s comments, published in the *American Art Review* speak for the prevailing response: “Evidently the new movement has spent its pyrotechnics, and after a great flourish of trumpets has settled down to solid average

work. . . . Even Mr. [Frank] Currier, the corypheus [sic] of impressionism in our art, 'roars you gently as any suckling dove' this year."⁷⁸ The writer for the *Evening Post* quipped: "The sturm und drang period is past. The era of slapdash has slipped away. . . . Sweetness and light have taken the place of soot. . . . The prime significance of the present exhibition as a whole is that it indicates on the part of the Society men an enormous growth in the right direction."⁷⁹ Critics celebrated a succession from student work to independent productions, a progression from artistic discipleship to maturity, "to have become no longer very young."⁸⁰ The departure was further symbolized by the inclusion of Bastien-Lepage's ambitious *Joan of Arc* with its tonally muted palette, squared brushwork, and blend of academicism and naturalism.

Overall, the critical response to the sculpture was positive, carrying forward the enthusiasm generated at the previous Society annual. Benjamin deemed the exhibition "rich in its specimens of plastic art."⁸¹ Cook editorialized in the *Daily Tribune*: "A few pieces of sculpture deserve notice: it is not the least of the signs of the time that, at last, we have some worthy sculpture in an exhibition."⁸² This annual signaled the entrance of Daniel Chester French into the Society exhibitions, yet Warner and Saint-Gaudens's contributions drew the most observation. Again, the variation in their aesthetic approaches was celebrated. In presciently calling for a New Yorker to enrich the young Metropolitan Museum of Art with bronze examples of Warner's sculptures, Cook observed: "Mr. A. St. Gaudens [is] a sculptor of a very different method from Mr. Warner—and happy is it for us that we have two men of talent with us, each richly dowered in his own way. . . ."⁸³ To most, Warner's technique, epitomized in the *Weir* and in its female counterpart *Maud Morgan*, was inherently more sculptural and easily

associated with the antique.⁸⁴ In allying American sculpture with a grand culture of the past, Brownell observed not only *Morgan's* Greek severity and largeness of presence, but also a distinct American sensibility and a faithful likeness. In this portrait—with its filleted hair, blank eyes, and fragmented shoulder termination, “the face is as American as the sculpture is Greek . . . the sense of measure and proportion, and at the same time . . . a light and bright touch dealing with a subject whose beauty is tinctured with a completely modern pensiveness.”⁸⁵

Praise for Saint-Gaudens's reliefs, with one exception, was unilaterally positive, ranging from Benjamin's terse assessment of his work as “very attractive specimens of the ability of one of our leading sculptors”⁸⁶ to Cook's more effusive:

Mr. A. St. Gaudens . . . sends several of the portrait-medallions to which he gives so strong an impression of his own individuality. One of these, a portrait of Bastien Le Page, is hung near the Joan of Arc, --two others, in plaster, slightly tinted, one the profile of a lady, the other of a little child, are sure to draw many people to thinking of the charming ways art meditates for fixing the forms of our beloved ones. There is flower-like grace and softness in Mr. St. Gaudens's work that is very winning. His head of little Rodman Gilder is as fresh and fragrant to the eye as any hyacinth nodding its curled head to the beckoning spring.⁸⁷

While critics only a year or two earlier had warned against technically confounding the arts of painting and sculpture, writers—to a certain extent—condoned a looser aesthetic in sculpture. This freer style symbolized a move away from the objective or factual to more subjective or interpretive overtones, paralleling a similar tendency in the paintings exhibited at the Society. In describing Saint-Gaudens's submissions, critics seemed willing to make exceptions, allowing that the sculptor's reliefs were perfectly suited to this modeling approach.

In granting that Saint-Gaudens's reliefs had formal similarities to paintings, critics also conceded to describing these works as “picturesque,” another previously *verboten*

characteristic of sculpture, even just a year earlier. Perhaps there was simply no term more apt to describe Saint-Gaudens's unusual approach; at any rate, its definition was irrevocably altered from generally negative to positive. To the *Critic*, 'picturesqueness,' seemed to refer to the spirit or overtone of the sculpture: "Bas-reliefs by [Saint-Gaudens] show him at work on charming children and maidens, and prove him once more to be a master of character, grace, and picturesqueness."⁸⁸ Writing for the *Nation*, Brownell remarked upon the difficult task of intuitively capturing not only the qualities of the sitter, but also the qualities of style. He found parallels between the patrician portraits of Wyatt Eaton and Abbot Thayer and the reliefs of Saint-Gaudens.⁸⁹ These he hailed "for refined picturesqueness, which we should say is the quality that distinguishes Mr. St. Gaudens's work, there is nothing in American sculpture, if that is anything to say, that equals his portrait of Bastien-Lepage, or the medallion of two young gentlemen in the centre of the room, or the charming little head in the annex."⁹⁰

De Kay, in his *New York Times* review, "The Chisel and Graver," devoted nearly half of it to Warner's accomplishments before turning to an extended consideration of Saint-Gaudens. In segueing between the two men, de Kay observed: "Augustus St. Gaudens has a touch entirely different, a more poetic touch, and a mind far more receptive of the picturesque." After describing the *Bastien-Lepage* as "spirited," de Kay found much to compliment in the delicate portrait medallion of a lady and the *Children of Prescott Hall Butler*, here linking the incorporation of accessories and other potentially extraneous details with the more conventional definition of "picturesque." He wrote:

In work of this kind Mr. St. Gaudens has noticeably a bent toward the picturesque, as is shown in the monograms, ribbons, the quaint texts, modeled somewhat on the old Latin inscriptions. It is a dangerous field to enter into, and only those who carry courage in one hand and exquisite taste in the other should

dare to tread it. The bronze bas-relief portrait of Dr. Henry Schiff [sic] has a little frog looking up in the physician's face, alluding to a taste for natural history, while the portrait of Bastien Le Page has in one corner a little nude figure, possibly commemorative of some famous picture by the painter. The portraits of the Butler children are highly decorated; only that of little Rodman Gilder is entirely unadorned. It is not found that these picturesque features detract from the bas-reliefs; sometimes they are surely a welcome addition, but one shudders to think of the result of such attempts in less skillful hands.⁹¹

This "picturesque" approach, as demonstrated, drew plaudits, but like de Kay, other critics clearly realized in it a potential danger. Writing for the *Art Amateur* under the pseudonym Edward Strahan, Earl Shinn praised O'Donovan's bust of Arthur Quartley (ca. 1880; unlocated) as "vigorous, full of impasto, and the most unctuous painting-quality." However, he harshly criticized the freer technique in Saint-Gaudens's *Butler Children*: "his two beautiful children . . . have the fat, puffy hands of diplomats, not those of children, sketched with self-satisfied chic, but without knowledge of child-anatomy." His general comments about the sculptor's submissions were unquestionably equivocal: "St. Gaudens's contributions are all of the most fairy-like charm and limpid clearness."⁹² While Shinn had been complimentary about O'Donovan, the artist still bore the brunt of Benjamin's critical censure. Again, with respect to the bust of Quartley, Benjamin differentiated between O'Donovan's freer and tighter modeling approaches and stressed that the pictorial approach was analogous to walking a fine line:

Mr. O'Donovan has endeavored to introduce into sculpture what may be called a broad style of treatment similar to breadth in painting, a method directly opposite to the minute handling he followed in his well known and masterly bust of Mr. Page. Leaving everything out of view except a general grasp of character and resemblance, avoiding all such little traits as to the ordinary observer are important evidences of likeness or identity, the sculptor has yet succeeded in producing an excellent idea of his subject.⁹³

To Brownell, who had praised Saint-Gaudens's "magical touch and pictorial treatment," O'Donovan's submission was a dismal failure, again because the sculptor strayed from a tried-and-true technique:

Nothing can be more unfortunate than the error it illustrates of sacrificing fundamental sculptural conditions to secure unhappy pictorial eccentricities. Mr. O'Donovan's serious sculpture has been abundantly over-praised and abundantly depreciated, but there is no possible room for doubt that he is more at home in it than in such ingenuously direct efforts after picturesqueness as this head, the mere placing of which on its stand indicates a fatal infelicity.⁹⁴

The prevailing response to the sculpture displayed in the 1881 exhibition reinforced the critical tendency to elevate Saint-Gaudens and Warner's reputations while setting the bar higher for other sculptors. If the innate talents of the two men allowed this, then so too did their unique friendships with the critics and their management-level status within the organization. O'Donovan himself was also an occasional critic, and may have indirectly hampered his sculptural reputation through his often abrasive and denouncing commentary, notably against John Quincy Adams Ward.⁹⁵ French and Bartlett were relative outsiders, the former from Boston, the latter from Paris, and both had yet to earn consistent respect in New York.⁹⁶ French did earn plaudits for one of his signature works: the vital portrait bust of Ralph Waldo Emerson (1879; marble, Memorial Hall, Harvard University, Cambridge, Mass.). Benjamin called it "a very graphic and characteristic work, which entitles the artist to a high position among our portrait sculptors."⁹⁷ Years later, French spoke of the club-like atmosphere that foreign-trained artists affiliated with the Society fostered: "I was included in this organization, but I felt almost entirely left out. I had not studied in Paris. . . . I felt like a man who had never been to college. They were all very kind to me, but I was not taken seriously at first. I was a sort of outsider without a hallmark."⁹⁸ However, French's participation signified a broadening of new

American sculptural talent, both geographically and creatively, and underscored the importance of reputation building in New York, America's leading center for the creation, display, criticism, study, and sale of art.

Society of American Artists, New York, 1882

The fifth exhibition of the Society of American Artists was held at the American Art Gallery at Madison Square, just steps from Saint-Gaudens's recently unveiled *Farragut Monument*. Saint-Gaudens's term as president had ended, and now Warner served as vice president under Weir, ensuring continued sculptural representation in the Society's management. The exhibition included eleven sculptures, again about ten percent of the total number of works on display. In a novel departure, the show was presented in two segments, the first more aesthetically progressive than the second.⁹⁹ The first, with 128 works, opened on April 6. The second supplement went on view on May 1, a move calculated to appease the artists whose paintings were accepted but then excluded from the first hanging for lack of space. This new hanging of works included Thomas Eakins's controversial *Crucifixion* (1880; Philadelphia Museum of Art). The sculptures remained, and were more favorably installed, having been moved from an adjacent passage-like space to the main gallery.¹⁰⁰

Overall, the sculpture received far less attention than in the 1880 and 1881 annuals. One critic dismissed it as "fast becoming conspicuous for its absence,"¹⁰¹ while others resorted to simply enumerating the contributions at the end of their articles. The 1882 exhibition was a reprise of the type of works exhibited by its consistent sculptor

participants over the previous several shows: O'Donovan presented two female relief portraits of Virginia Gerson (1881; private collection) and Ermennie Smith (unlocated); Warner exhibited one portrait medallion and one ideal work; and Saint-Gaudens displayed three bas-relief portraits. In addition to the usual players, which included Baur, there were three newcomers: Eugene Pfister with *Study of Head* (unlocated); Edward Spring with *Portrait Relief* (unlocated); and Louis St. Gaudens, Augustus's youngest brother, with *Piping Pan (Young Pan)* (fig. 41).¹⁰²

Critically, the themes that had emerged in relation to the sculpture in the 1881 show carried over to the 1882 exhibition—dominated by the issues of the sketch, completeness, and the dissolving formal boundaries between painting and sculpture. Trends in painting impacted sculpture as well, notably the transition toward a more decorative aesthetic (drawing particularly on English and Japanesque sources) and from Munich to Paris-based stylistic influences. On the whole, as the writer for the *Sun* observed, the exhibition showed “more of independent personality in the work, more mastery in the color, and, generally, more vigor and completeness of execution,” with a preference for figural subjects over landscapes.¹⁰³ This stylistic metamorphosis, as mentioned above, was signaled by the inclusion of Bastien-Lepage's *Joan of Arc* in the 1881 annual. In the 1882 show, it was solidified by the presence of James McNeill Whistler's *Arrangement in Grey and Black: Portrait of the Painter's Mother* (1871; Musée d'Orsay, Paris), hung in the place of honor previously occupied by *Joan of Arc*.

Such Americans as Chase, La Farge, and Thomas Wilmer Dewing, all close associates of Saint-Gaudens, quickly assimilated this decorative aesthetic in paintings submitted to the 1882 and 1883 Society exhibitions. Sculptors kept apace. Baur's 1882

submission was a large colored plaster relief panel of a salamander in flames modeled for Tiffany & Co., probably for a utilitarian purpose such as a fire back while Warner displayed a fanciful plaster relief, *Cupid and Psyche*, almost square in shape. Saint-Gaudens's own transition to a more decorative manner was already visible in 1881 in the *Children of Prescott Hall Butler* and *Dr. Henry Shiff*, where the decorative and sketch aesthetics are united. He pursued it further in his work shown in 1882, most notably in *Gertrude Vanderbilt*, and well as in other reliefs that he did not exhibit publicly.¹⁰⁴

Saint-Gaudens's three portraits—of Samuel Gray Ward, Homer Schiff Saint-Gaudens, and Gertrude Vanderbilt—while varying in the ages of the sitters, collectively reinforce the prevailing trend toward displaying sketchy low reliefs as finished works. The *Ward* and *Vanderbilt* were commissioned reliefs, not for sale, while the owner of the *Saint-Gaudens* was listed in the catalogue as Dr. Henry Shiff.¹⁰⁵ *Samuel Gray Ward* (fig. 36) was among Saint-Gaudens's first commissioned portrait medallions, the result of a contact through White and McKim.¹⁰⁶ As the inscription at the top of the vertical composition attests, the portrait of Ward was completed in May 1881, an auspicious moment in Saint-Gaudens's career with the dedication of the *Farragut* at the month's end. The *Ward*, shown at the Society in bronze, is arguably the sculptor's virtuoso exercise in the sketch aesthetic, epitomizing what critics saw as its best qualities—freedom of modeling and a spirited vitality, coupled with an accurate likeness and a technical command of the medium. Ward, a devoted patron of the arts and a founder of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, is depicted seated at half-length, profile facing right and hands folded in his lap. The depth of the relief—only 1/8-inch—was the lowest the sculptor ever attempted. Remarkably, there remains a convincing sense of depth, even

though the fluidly treated figure is intimately conjoined with a background etched with an all-over pattern of tiny horizontal lines. The loose, textured surface recalls impastoed pigment while tool marks project the illusion of brushstrokes; clay, in fact, appears drawn rather than sculpted. This treatment is particularly apparent on the rich, mottled texture of Ward's coat and in the wiry bristles of the beard and mustache. Saint-Gaudens was pleased with the result, calling it "as a bit of art I think . . . one of the two or three of the best of the medallions."¹⁰⁷

The second of Saint-Gaudens's portraits, *Homer Schiff Saint-Gaudens* (fig. 37), was modeled in February 1882 as a gift to Dr. Henry Schiff. Schiff was the sculptor's confidante from his Rome and Paris days, and Homer's godfather and namesake, albeit with a slight change in spelling. One of the most intimate of Saint-Gaudens's bas-reliefs, this likeness is a tangible expression of the love the father felt for his seventeen-month-old son. Homer is depicted in half-length profile, facing left, seated in a child-size chair and enveloped in the voluminous folds of his dress. His figure, rendered in a tactile, fluid modeling style, is terminated by a ledge that fills the lower register of the portrait. Unlike some of Saint-Gaudens's earlier reliefs that have a similar tripartite division of pictorial space, there are no inscriptions or symbolic attributes in the lower register: it is simply delineated with horizontal striations. The field of space above Homer's head is principally occupied by the lengthy dedication to Schiff, divided into five rows and carried out in Saint-Gaudens's characteristic block-like lettering punctuated by bullets between the words.

The third relief exhibited was a now-unlocated rectangular portrait of young Gertrude Vanderbilt (fig. 38), future sculptor and founder of the Whitney Museum of

American Art. It was directly related to a larger project on which Saint-Gaudens was engaged for a French Renaissance-style mansion for Cornelius Vanderbilt II, designed by George Browne Post between 1879 and 1882 and located on the corner of Fifth Avenue and Fifty-seventh street. Saint-Gaudens produced for the entrance hall a monumental mantel (fig. 39) and for the dining room ceiling he created fourteen elaborately carved mahogany panels after designs by La Farge.¹⁰⁸ Inlaid with marble, ivory, coral, mother-of-pearl, and other rich materials, the panels included such subjects as *Ceres* (fig. 40) and *Bacchus* (unlocated).¹⁰⁹ The *Art Journal* in 1881 name this ensemble the epitome of “the luxury of New York of the present day and the particular form it is taking.”¹¹⁰

The rectangular bronze of Gertrude Vanderbilt, age seven, was one of at least three bas-relief portraits of family members that the sculptor modeled for the house at the same time.¹¹¹ The sitter, in a plumed poke bonnet, is shown half-length in profile against a flattened background of rose blossoms and leaves. She faces left, curly tresses tumbling over her shoulders and hands reaching up to touch the plants. That this relief is more decorative in handling than that of Saint-Gaudens’s earlier work is hardly surprising given the sumptuous and artfully programmed surroundings for which it was intended.

Critically, the 1882 exhibition may not be called Saint-Gaudens’s greatest moment. Although in the main he earned praise for the individuality of his reliefs, writers paid him far less attention than in the past two years. None of his reliefs emerged as a particular favorite of the critics, a distinction that was instead shared by Louis St. Gaudens for his *Piping Pan* (fig. 41) and Warner for his *Cupid and Psyche* (fig. 42). In assessing these reviews, Saint-Gaudens clearly reads as a preeminent sculptor, but one senses that the novelty of his bas-relief style wearing off. Critics, now versed in its formal

elements, were more discerning and less effusive or analytical in their assessments: they accepted, even expected, such work from his hand. For instance, the writer for the New York supplement of the *Magazine of Art* dismissed the sculpture in just a few lines, noting the presence of Saint-Gaudens's "characteristic portraits in low relief," while the *Herald* tersely spoke of his submissions as "admirable."¹¹² Cook, in a biting assessment of much of the sculpture, noted, "Mr. Augustus St. Gaudens sends three of those panels with heads in low relief in profile, treated in style seemingly more pictorial than sculptural, but which would appear to have found much favor with the public." After discussing medallions by O'Donovan, Pfister, and Spring, Cook urged further exploration of this stylistic route: "Here in one small room are shown six medallions, and all reflecting a distinctive originality in their authors, a movement of much interest in our art and one that we hope will be encouraged."¹¹³

In Cook's review, Saint-Gaudens's style, although classified as pictorial, is accepted as within the bounds of sculpture, a trend consistent with his work shown in 1881. Van Rensselaer commented along the same lines: "The sculptures were chiefly bas-reliefs in the semi-pictorial style which is getting so popular with our best workmen; a style which is reprobated, of course, by dogmatic expounders of the canons of plastic art, but which justifies itself beyond appeal in its best examples."¹¹⁴ Painterly or graphic analogies appear in other reviews as well. In one of the shrewder assessments of Saint-Gaudens's contributions, the writer for the *World* touched on one of the sculptor's greatest assets, his ability to render a convincing sense of depth in a more-or-less two-dimensional work:

The pictorial charm—which is indeed such, yet remains well within the limits of

plastic appropriateness—of Mr. St. Gaudens's portrait-reliefs charms one more and more. It is hard to choose between the charming little girl with the background of roses and the life-like representation of Mr. Ward, so full of character and feeling. The artist's fine tact is shown in the variedly appropriate methods of treatment he has put to use in these two works. And one marvels evermore at the massive relief he evolves to the eye from the very slightly differing levels of his bronze plates.¹¹⁵

The *Sun*'s critic explored these themes—innovation, pictorialism, and technical and compositional flair—as well, but in an even more complimentary vein. In a tidy synthesis of these issues, he found the sculptor's three reliefs:

. . . remarkable for the most distinct originality of treatment and design. Mr. St. Gaudens's work is always characterized by a wholesome unconventionality, but his reliefs are especially charming for a quality of free-hand drawing and great respect to the minor traits of the subject. . . . In both [the *Ward* and *Vanderbilt*] the relief is low; the artist has apparently allowed himself as little latitude of light and shade as possible; but the result in the metal is round and full of effective modelling. There is a refined and agreeable concert in these bronzes that is particularly attractive and interesting. Their entire novelty, the pleasant sense of decorative arrangement of simple materials that they betray, and their distinct artistic individuality impart to them an interest that the work of our sculptors has seldom been able to command.¹¹⁶

Interestingly, the writer's observation that Saint-Gaudens's reliefs reflected a quality of free-hand drawing recalls La Farge's advice to "paint a bas-relief" in order to attain the fluidity and immediacy of pigment, first in clay, and then in bronze.¹¹⁷

Opinions about Saint-Gaudens's individual works naturally varied, but in general critics preferred *Homer Schiff Saint-Gaudens*, found fault with *Gertrude Vanderbilt*, and varied on the *Samuel Gray Ward*. Clearly the subject of a winsome toddler appealed. The popular *Art Amateur* singled out Saint-Gaudens's "bronze relief of his own chubby little boy," while Van Rensselaer called it "most beautiful," and Cook believed it to be the best of Saint-Gaudens's three submissions.¹¹⁸ The *World* found *Homer Saint-Gaudens* "more complete" than *Gertrude Vanderbilt*. The writer praised the head and decorative

background as “charming” (a favored choice of word with several writers), but found fault with the awkward placement of Gertrude’s hands.¹¹⁹ Others echoed this sentiment, even those who were normally advocates, representing one of the more widespread criticisms of a work by Saint-Gaudens. Van Rensselaer observed that the “action of the hands was unfortunate.”¹²⁰ Cook, confusing the gender of the sitter, took Saint-Gaudens even further to task: “The action of the child’s hands is without purpose. He is neither pulling the roses nor playing with them, so that we wonder why it was thought necessary to introduce the hands at all.”¹²¹ As for the *Ward*, Cook, writing in an acerbic tone, found it “weak in both conception and in execution.”¹²² In an opposing vein, certainly in keeping with current appreciation for the *Ward*, the *Sun*’s critic opined: “As a simple piece of portraiture it would be hard to find anything more complete or satisfying.”¹²³

Whether Saint-Gaudens was disappointed by the mixed reception to his work is not documented, but his pattern of exhibiting his works at art venues over the next several years suggests that the 1882 exhibition represented a departure of sorts, from an artist who relied on the annuals for reputation-building to one who selectively opted to show when the availability of original work allowed. On the other hand, it was a stellar moment for his brother Louis St. Gaudens, who was content to remain in his brother’s shadow. Louis exhibited a plaster ideal subject *Piping Pan*, a slender mischievous boy, with a wreath of ivy encircling his head. Poised with feet apart, he holds slender pipes from which he energetically plays melodies.¹²⁴ *Piping Pan*, the best known of Louis’s few independent works, drew the attention of the critics. Indeed the *Critic* found in the sculpture at the Society “the most interesting thing being the appearance of a new sculptor in the person of Mr. Louis St. Gaudens.”¹²⁵ As to the fanciful *Piping Pan*, the

writer for the *Sun* called it “. . . a wholly independent and original piece of work. . . . The face is quite a revelation in its detail and expression, and in its conceit of the Greek ideal.”¹²⁶ To some critics, the slack modeling was a detriment, and indeed one is hard pressed to disagree with the crabby Cook’s observation that *Piping Pan* “has much that is charming about it. . . . But his skin seems to be rather loose on his body, and suggests the possibility of pulling about it as if it were only a rather tight-fitting shirt.”¹²⁷ Still, *Piping Pan* generated far more enthusiasm than Augustus Saint-Gaudens’s works in frequency of mentions in articles and in the proportion of positive versus negative commentary.

Lastly, Warner’s sculptures were still largely immune from negative criticism at the Society annuals. Unlike Saint-Gaudens, he submitted not only portraits, but also imaginative subjects that may have offered greater fodder for critical analysis.¹²⁸ His *Cupid and Psyche* was uniformly admired, with the caveat that the subject was misnamed in the catalogue and in actuality it represented a winged nymph leaning over a flaming tripod over to kiss a pudgy cupid.¹²⁹ Van Rensselaer ventured to pronounce it among the finest works in the show, citing with it Thayer’s portrait *Lady and Horse* (ca. 1881; private collection).¹³⁰ Formally, Warner’s relief style, with its fuller modeling and greater dimensionality, avoided charges of pictorialism leveled at other sculptors in the exhibition. Cook, who was by this time souring on Saint-Gaudens, had only words of praise for Warner and his purer sculptural approach. After an extensive description of *Cupid and Psyche*’s virtues, he pondered: “It seems strange to us that a man as thoroughly trained in his art as Mr. Warner, who has given us the best busts and best bas-reliefs that we have had—looked at from the side of purely artistic treatment and as specimens in style of sculpture—should have been so long in meeting with public

recognition of his merit."¹³¹ As Warner (and Saint-Gaudens) knew, critical advocacy of works shown at the Society did not necessarily assure prestigious and remunerative monumental commissions.¹³²

Other Cities, Other Venues, Other Monuments

As stated in the introduction, this dissertation does not analyze the criticism of Saint-Gaudens's sculpture when exhibited at art venues in other American cities. However, it is revealing to look at when, where, and what he exhibited in locations other than New York. It is appropriate to do so at this juncture because much of this activity took place in the 1880s after the sculptor had gained a strong foothold in New York, but still aspired to more widespread national recognition. I contend that in general Saint-Gaudens exhibited his work in Philadelphia, Boston, and Chicago, less for the promise of public critical exposure or for new small portrait orders, but rather for the opportunity to make his name known to well-placed individuals, particularly those who were involved in or had the power to influence selections for potential monumental commissions.

Three brief examples may suffice, the first from Saint-Gaudens's early New York career when he eagerly seized any opportunity to promote his name. Shortly after the close of the Centennial International Exhibition in 1876, Saint-Gaudens made arrangements to put two portraits on view at the nearby Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, just reopened in its grand new Frank Furness building. One was a plaster cast taken from the marble *William Maxwell Evarts* that was exhibited at the Centennial; the other was the original plaster model of *Theodore Dwight Woolsey*. A letter to James L.

Claghorn of early 1877 indicates that Saint-Gaudens had befriended the Academy president and esteemed print collector to the extent that the sculptor had “before him” Claghorn’s “really grand” etching of *Christ and Lazarus*.¹³³ Saint-Gaudens’s works were not included in the Academy’s annual exhibition, but rather displayed in the main corridor with the impressive permanent sculpture collection and other long-term loans gathered together in an attempt to fill the new space. This grouping of approximately 100 objects was composed of predominantly neoclassical works by the likes of Antonio Canova, Bertel Thorvaldsen, Giuseppe Ceracchi, and Joseph A. Bailly, names with which Saint-Gaudens must have been pleased to have been associated. How long his two pieces remained on view is not known.

Likewise, shortly after his return to the United States in 1880, Saint-Gaudens sent five works to the “Exhibition of Works by Living American Artists” in Boston. This exhibition was held at the Museum of Fine Arts, newly opened in 1876 in Copley Square, and was on view between November 9 and December 20, 1880. This representative sampling of national talent included familiar names from the Society of American Artists and William Morris Hunt’s circle. There were twenty-one pieces in the sculpture display, including six by Warner, three by Truman Howe Bartlett, and two by his son Paul Wayland Bartlett. Local Boston sculptors James Priestman, Pierre Millet, Carrie Frazar, and Daniel Chester French also participated.

Saint-Gaudens displayed the marble bust of Woolsey that had earned extensive critical admiration in New York earlier that year, and four bronze reliefs: *Bastien-Lepage*, *Shiff*, *Rodman de Kay Gilder*, and *Frank Millet* (1879; The Metropolitan Museum of Art).¹³⁴ The *Bastien-Lepage* and *Millet* had been exhibited in the Paris Salon of 1880.

When informing his wife of his plans, Saint-Gaudens predicted: "I am going to make quite a big show at the Boston exhibit next month."¹³⁵ Critical assessments in the Boston newspapers bore out the sculptor's promise. As a case in point, the *Daily Advertiser* named Saint-Gaudens "the chief contributor to the group of sculpture, which is the best of its kind assembled for years in Boston. . . . The . . . sculptor's small bas-relief portrait medallions are charming for their more intimate and informal method."¹³⁶ These remained at that museum over the winter while a committee finalized the selection and acquisition of the *Bastien-Lepage*, an exemplary Parisian sand-cast bronze and Olin Warner's plaster head of Maud Morgan (destroyed).¹³⁷ For each artist, it was his first piece to enter a public collection. Saint-Gaudens originally lobbied for the purchase of the *Bastien-Lepage* as well as the *Millet* and *Schiff* reliefs, suggesting prices of \$150 for the former and \$125 for the two latter, but capitulated: "I should be willing to accept any sum below the price I have given. . . ."¹³⁸ He later wrote to museum curator Charles G. Loring that the accession of the *Bastien-Lepage* "is certainly one of the most agreeable events in my life as an artist."¹³⁹

Saint-Gaudens's concern for performing well in Boston certainly must have been related to his ongoing interest in the commission for a long-anticipated memorial to Colonel Robert Gould Shaw as well as his desire to further prove himself by creating an equestrian monument. Plans for a monument to the fallen leader of the Massachusetts Fifty-fourth Regiment in Boston began in 1865, and were actively publicized by the late 1870s.¹⁴⁰ In 1881, with fundraising proceeding apace, the Shaw Monument Committee moved forward with plans to hire a sculptor. Again, Saint-Gaudens reaped the benefits of well-placed personal contacts and was recommended through the influence of

Richardson, a neighbor of the committee treasurer Edward Atkinson.¹⁴¹ Saint-Gaudens first met with the committee in 1882, and in February 1884, after completing numerous sketches and models, signed the contract for the *Shaw* commission, a commission that would consume the sculptor for the next thirteen years.

In Chicago, plans were afoot in the early 1880s for a monument to Abraham Lincoln for Lincoln Park.¹⁴² Saint-Gaudens promoted himself for this commission (further discussed in Chapter 5), which he earned in 1883, through several channels. One was submitting his work to the annual art exhibitions of the Inter-State Industrial Exposition in 1881 and 1882. The art displays, organized by Sara Hallowell, featured not only local talent, but national as well.¹⁴³ In all likelihood, she solicited Saint-Gaudens's participation in order to improve the caliber of sculpture on display. In autumn 1881, he showed six works in Chicago, three of which had been on view at the Society of American Artists earlier in the year (*The Butler Children*, *Bastien-Lepage*, and probably the same plaster relief of an unidentified woman). Additionally he was represented by two bronze bas-reliefs of William L. Picknell (fig. 43), one lent by the artist Thomas Hovenden, as well as a bronze plaque of George W. Maynard (1877; Century Association, New York).¹⁴⁴ The *Daily Inter-Ocean* deemed these works by "New York's sculptor" as "worthy of inspection and praise."¹⁴⁵ From this exhibition, Saint-Gaudens sold the *Bastien-Lepage*, representing the only instance of the artist pricing his work for sale in the accompanying exhibition catalogue (see Appendix). This copper electrotype version was purchased by Hallowell (now in the collection of the Art Institute of Chicago).¹⁴⁶ The sculptor's success continued. Out of the following Inter-State Industrial Exposition, he sold a bronze cast of *Homer Saint-Gaudens*.¹⁴⁷

Several patterns in Saint-Gaudens's exhibition history in other cities may be discerned. With one exception, he only showed at the respective cities' major art venues: the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston, the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts in Philadelphia, and the Inter-State Industrial Exposition in Chicago.¹⁴⁸ He rarely debuted new work at these exhibitions, reserving his most recent sculpture for display in New York and sending the same portraits to other cities in the months following. For instance, in 1882 he first showed the reliefs of Homer Saint-Gaudens, Gertrude Vanderbilt, and Samuel G. Ward at the Society of American Artists, and then sent the same selection to the tenth annual exhibition of the Inter-State Industrial Exposition.¹⁴⁹ Exceptions arose in instances when the exhibited work had a special affiliation with the city in which it was shown. Such was the case in 1885 with the bronze relief portrait of botanist Asa Gray for Harvard College (fig. 44) that was exhibited at the Fifth Annual Exhibition of Contemporary American Art at the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston.¹⁵⁰ Similarly that year, Philadelphia neurologist and Gilder intimate Dr. Silas Weir Mitchell lent his own three-quarter-length bas-relief portrait (1884; private collection, Philadelphia) to the fifty-sixth annual exhibition of the Pennsylvania Academy where it earned accolades.¹⁵¹ In such instances, it is unknown whether Saint-Gaudens or the lender drove the decision to participate, although in the latter instance presumably the sculptor would have agreed to its inclusion.

Between 1879 and 1882, Saint-Gaudens displayed his work annually at the Society of American Artists, showcasing his newest portraits. After 1882, his participation in Society annuals was inconsistent, and he did not exhibit again in New York until 1886. During this time he showed twice in Boston (1883 and 1885) and once

each in Chicago (1882) and Philadelphia (1885). With the escalation of his reputation following the unveiling of the *Farragut Monument* in 1881, Saint-Gaudens aggressively expanded his priorities, ambitions, and expectations within and beyond New York. He was awarded several public monumental commissions, including in 1881, *The Puritan (Deacon Samuel Chapin)* for Springfield, Massachusetts, and in 1883 *Abraham Lincoln: The Man (Standing Lincoln)* for Chicago, each unveiled in 1887, as well as in 1884 the *Robert Gould Shaw Memorial* for Boston, unveiled in 1897. Art periodicals and the daily press frequently reported on his progress on these projects and others, notably the Cornelius Vanderbilt interior, but offered little incisive commentary on style or the sculptor's reputation. These mounting obligations and the concomitant rise in Saint-Gaudens's prestige necessarily reduced the amount of small portrait work that he undertook, the type of work that was ideally suited for display at these art venues and that generated useful critical discussion in the context of other sculptors' productions.

A second explanation for Saint-Gaudens's removal from New York art venues exists as well. In the several years following his presidency of the Society of American Artists, Saint-Gaudens became increasingly disillusioned with the direction that the organization was taking under Chase's presidency. He felt frustrated by the Society's lack of unified aim, funding woes, and the limited role that sculptors played; the sense of fraternity that had existed between painters and sculptors in the later 1870s was now tenuous. Even during his tenure as president, Saint-Gaudens revealed his frustration with its operation and his "conviction of the impossibility of artists—as a body accomplishing anything strongly practical."¹⁵²

In 1883, the sculptor was still involved in the Society's annual, serving on the selection and hanging committees, but not displaying his own work. Of the 148 submissions that year, including a portrait by Velazquez, just seven were sculptures.¹⁵³ The critic for the *Daily Tribune* noted Saint-Gaudens's absence: "In sculpture neither Mr. Augustus St. Gaudens nor his brother are represented."¹⁵⁴ The writer lamented the plastic entries, with the exception of Warner's bronze bust of Isabella Cottier (1882; unlocated: plaster, Smithsonian American Art Museum), as did several other publications. The *Evening Post* opined: "The few examples of sculpture which accompany this exhibition are of little importance. The art of sculpture is in a far from prosperous condition at the present time."¹⁵⁵ In discussing Frederick William MacMonnies's submission, a bust of his father William MacMonnies (1880-83; unlocated), Clarence Cook could not refuse at backhanded jab at the young sculptor's mentor: "Mr. MacMonnies does his best to make up for Augustus St. Gaudens's absence by an amusing travesty of that clever artist's peculiar tricks and manners, including even the puzzle alphabet, his pride and patent."¹⁵⁶ Although Cook acknowledged the distinctiveness of Saint-Gaudens's compositions, the words "clever," "peculiar," and "tricks" were certainly not intended as compliments.

There were no sculptures included in the 1884 exhibition of the Society of American Artists, a small showing of eighty-eight works dominated by the paintings of Chase and his followers.¹⁵⁷ Because of constant confusion with the American Art Gallery where the annual had been held for the past several years, the Society of American Artists held the exhibition at the National Academy of Design in its south gallery. Saint-Gaudens's own response surely echoed this item in the *New York Times*: "the public will take the move as a tacit acknowledgement that the society has abandoned all rivalry and

has taken a second position.”¹⁵⁸ The writer for the *Herald* editorialized about the dearth of sculpture and its larger implications:

There are fewer striking works than usual which are of capital importance, and the work of many prominent members or usual contributors is greatly missed. Among those unrepresented this season who have done much to add to the former displays are . . . Augustus and Louis Saint-Gaudens, Olin L. Warner. . . . Possibly some of these figure among the rejected. If they do, Heaven help the committee to the enjoyment of undeserved good consciences! There are no sculptures shown, which is greatly to be regretted, as it was only at the exhibitions of the Society that any plastic works of much account have been shown of late years.¹⁵⁹

The circumstances for the exclusion of sculpture are unknown: the limited gallery space available at the National Academy may have dictated its exclusion for practical reasons. Alternatively, it is plausible to speculate that Saint-Gaudens had a role in encouraging other sculptors to be conscientious objectors due to the “Academization” of the Society, a straying from its original mission, and a lack of accommodation for sculptors. A critic, again from the *Herald*, offers an explanation:

A few of the members who did not contribute refused to do so on account of the move to the Academy, while many of the others seem to have lost interest in a body which often displays such narrow minded views of art. What is exhibited this year has a high artistic average, but it is chosen on general from too one-sided a standpoint. The present system of jury voting was inaugurated when Augustus Saint Gaudens became president of the society, and it is greatly to be regretted that he resigned from the jury for the present display. Had he remained a member wiser councils would have prevailed.¹⁶⁰

Apparently Saint-Gaudens resigned from the jury in late March, as he insinuated in a letter to Thomas Eakins who had written the sculptor to protest the rejection of his pendant relief sculptures *Spinning* and *Knitting* (1882-83; Philadelphia Museum of Art).¹⁶¹ Critics, with few exceptions, soundly renounced the 1884 exhibition, and the following year, the Society of American Artists remained so embroiled in internal strife that no annual was held.

Saint-Gaudens's only recorded participation in an exhibition in 1884 was that spring at the Calumet Club, a small arts organization on Thirtieth Street in New York. For a survey of American portraits organized by Chase and J. Carroll Beckwith, Saint-Gaudens submitted "bronze plaques of children's portraits in bas-relief," perhaps those of the Prescott Hall Butler children and Homer Saint-Gaudens. The charm of their juvenile features led Montague Marks to predict in the *Art Amateur* that the sculptor's studio "would be besieged by fond mammas."¹⁶²

Shortly after the close of the maligned 1884 Society show, Saint-Gaudens finally saw the unveiling of his *Robert Richard Randall Memorial* (fig. 45) at Sailors' Snug Harbor, on Staten Island, on May 30.¹⁶³ The historical portrait depicted the eighteenth-century benefactor of Sailors' Snug Harbor, a home for retired seamen. The bronze is mounted on a two-tiered pedestal of pink granite of White's design. After destroying his first version of the portrait, Saint-Gaudens still was not entirely pleased by the final result (he later commented, "The less said about the 'Randall' the better").¹⁶⁴ However, he did attract notice from the press eager to review his first monument dedicated since the *Farragut*. Gilder, in particular, was familiar with this project, for as a result of Saint-Gaudens's entreaties, he had assisted the sculptor by researching appropriate naval attire when in London in 1879.¹⁶⁵ Gilder's widely circulated *Century Magazine* published a timely article on Sailors' Snug Harbor in the June 1884 issue. The frontispiece to the issue was a drawing by Kenyon Cox (fig. 46) after Saint-Gaudens's statue, which itself drew plaudits.¹⁶⁶ The *Randall* was praised in the *Art Year-Book* as an affirmation of Saint-Gaudens's high reputation as America's sculptor:

Mr. St. Gaudens, who stands in the foremost rank of American sculptors, has during the past year added greatly to his already wide reputation with his statue of

Robert Richard Randall. . . . The work is remarkable, not only for its masterly technique, but for the admirable manner in which the sculpture has realised and set before us the spirit of a past generation in all its living, breathing humanity. The easy grace of the pose, the admirable composition of line, are as striking as is the rendering of personal and national characteristics in the typical American subject. Another work which has done much to substantiate Mr. Gaudens's [sic] claims to be regarded as the strongest of the younger sculptors in his lifesize full length statue of Admiral Farragut, a robust and manly piece of work and an admirable embodiment of the American national idea. As a portrait-sculptor Mr. St. Gaudens ranks second to none.¹⁶⁷

Other critics were less florid in their assessments, and justifiably so. With the advantage of hindsight, the arguably characterless *Randall* falls far short of Saint-Gaudens's best ideal historical portrait, that of Deacon Samuel Chapin, *The Puritan*, for Springfield, Massachusetts.

Cook wrote a lengthy article "Some Recent Statues" for the August 2, 1884, issue of the *Studio*, the first issue under his editorship.¹⁶⁸ In it he observed: "Of late there seems to have set in what in the slang of the day we should call 'a boom' in public monuments."¹⁶⁹ Discussing in turn several sculptures that had recently been dedicated, Cook first assessed the *Randall* at length in tepid terms. Granting that Saint-Gaudens had been faced with the challenging task of evolving a portrait out of his "inner consciousness," Cook assessed the *Randall* as "a living breathing man, and his personality well imagined whatever foundation there may have existed for such a presentment." While praising the siting of the sculpture, he at the same time criticized the costume. He observed: "In truth, it would be as well if the statue could only be seen in front, for the view of it from the sides is awkward in the extreme, the coat clumsy and ill-fitting, so obtruding itself on the eye that the figure loses all dignity, and the head cannot make itself felt in the midst of all of this swarm of clothes."¹⁷⁰ Cook also discussed the similarity in pose between the *Randall* and the *Farragut*, allowing that "Mr. St. Gaudens'

work will have a family likeness.” After offering a lengthy attack on the *Farragut* pedestal, he criticized the lines of the *Randall*’s base, presumably its unusual rounded corners, and stated his preference for placing statues on strictly classicizing bases.¹⁷¹

If Cook’s vacillating assessments had come to be expected, an incident underscoring the ongoing, if not predictable, dialogue between critical censure versus favoritism in Saint-Gaudens’s career deserves brief remark. In two February 1886 issues of the weekly *American Architect and Building News*, the Boston-based sculptor and critic Truman Howe Bartlett published the first two in a series of four articles titled “Sitting Statues,” surveying the history of this sculptural form in America.¹⁷² Bartlett focused the first two articles on Warner’s statue of Governor William Buckingham, unveiled at the Connecticut State Capitol in June 1884. He discoursed at length on Warner’s student years, early career, and the warm critical reception he earned for his portrait busts. But Bartlett, a friend and advocate of Warner’s since the 1870s, expressed disappointment in the *Buckingham* and the lack of individuality and spontaneity in treating his sitter. To Bartlett, Warner had fallen far short of his potential, and this public castigation was a contributing factor to a permanent rift between the two men.¹⁷³

In response to this article, the *Critic*, a weekly journal, expressed dismay that Bartlett had subjected Warner to an “overt” attack, by “pronouncing the result of his most important artistic effort a death-blow to all these hopes.”¹⁷⁴ The journal, under the editorship of Jeannette and Joseph Gilder, sister and a brother of Richard Watson Gilder, also found that Saint-Gaudens was the victim of “covert” criticism in Bartlett’s failure to mention him among the leading American sculptors with Warner and Ward. The article stated: “The attack on Mr. Saint-Gaudens is very subtle. It consists in ignoring him where

the mention of his name is imperatively demanded. There is singular indelicacy in an artist's thus attacking his more fortunate rivals, and it is unaccountable that a journal of the *Architect's* standing should open its columns to such an assault."¹⁷⁵ The Gilders of the *Critic*, like Gilder of the *Century*, were loyal advocates of Saint-Gaudens foremost and Warner secondarily. In essence, they accused Bartlett of spitefulness and jealousy, a claim that cannot be discredited given Bartlett's extreme dislike of Saint-Gaudens whom he met during Saint-Gaudens's student days in Paris and publicly and privately maligned over many years.¹⁷⁶ In retort, the *American Architect and Building News* defended the content, if not opinions, of Bartlett's article: "We fear that personal friendship for the two sculptors it champions obscured the usual good judgment and perceptive faculties of our good friend at the *Critic*. . . . In one point we heartily agree with the critics, that is, that 'the attack on Mr. St. Gaudens is very subtle.'" The response then got at the essence of its point, that art critics had become adept at phrasing their adjectives in only positive terms:

Very few artists have any true idea of their real merits, and we can conceive it to be intensely disagreeable to an artist and that artist's friends to have said aloud anything that is not couched in the usual terms of fulsome adulation. . . . The work is almost always done with a bias, and almost always a favorable one, so that, consciously or unconsciously the critic presents the favorable side only of his subject, and five to the world as a complete study what is really only a partial one—in more senses than one of the word.¹⁷⁷

To the editors, Bartlett's appeal lay in the fact that he was "as willing to blame as to praise, and willing to do both unflinchingly."¹⁷⁸ Several points may be taken from this fairly minor, but telling spat, which on both sides reflected a charged response out of proportion to the issue. First, Saint-Gaudens was indeed the beneficiary of the sort of unwavering partial and positive analysis that the *Architect* mentioned. Second, Saint-Gaudens's devotees went to lengths to defend him when they felt he had been critically

wronged or not given just due as a leading American sculptor. Lastly, negative criticism of Bartlett's outspoken and frankly vindictive tenor was against the grain, especially to critics with an underlying agenda of promoting the viability of American art in a cosmopolitan framework.

Society of American Artists, New York, 1886

Saint-Gaudens returned to displaying his work at the Society of American Artists, and in New York, in its eighth exhibition, held at the Metropolitan Museum of Art. As one newspaper put it, the Society recovered "from the comatose state into which it fell after its display at the National Academy of Design in the spring of 1884."¹⁷⁹ Amendments had been made to the constitution, most notably increasing the jury from nine to thirty to assure greater equanimity in selection of works.¹⁸⁰ The show, installed in the museum's Second Western Gallery, had a lengthy run, from May 5 to October 15, 1886, in conjunction with the Metropolitan's own summer installation. Reviewers commented positively on the space, one of the museum's second-floor picture galleries, where a linen screen suspended under the skylights created favorable lighting effects.¹⁸¹ As with its predecessors, the exhibition was small, with 121 works by eighty-three artists. It was composed predominantly of portraits, but included an increasing number of outdoor scenes as well as work in pastel and watercolor, among them Chase's critically favored *Meditation* (ca. 1885-86; private collection). The show contained just five sculptures, despite the participation of Saint-Gaudens, French, and Warner on the usually large and intentionally democratized selection committee of twenty-five. Still, the organization,

now under Chase's presidency, was in reality a painters' group. While the Society's membership had ballooned to eighty-four artists, only six were sculptors.¹⁸²

The five sculptures included in the 1886 exhibition represented a cross-section of subjects and modeling styles. Frank Edwin Elwell, recently returned from study in Paris and Ghent, displayed a plaster bust of Job (unlocated), while London-based sculptor G. Natorp exhibited a bronze statuette of Hercules (unlocated).¹⁸³ The remaining three submissions were portraits: O'Donovan's ideal bronze bust of Chaucer's heroine Emilie (unlocated); Warner's plaster study for a bronze portrait of the art and literary writer William C. Brownell (fig. 47); and Saint-Gaudens's ambitious relief, *The Children of Jacob H. Schiff* (fig. 48), which exhibition reviews identify as an ivory-tinted plaster replica.¹⁸⁴

One of Saint-Gaudens's most commanding and complex reliefs, *The Children of Jacob H. Schiff* was commissioned in 1882, a gift in bronze to Schiff, a New York banker, from his boyhood friend Sir Ernest Cassel of Great Britain.¹⁸⁵ The sculptor completed it between 1884 and 1885 in New York and during his first summer in Cornish, New Hampshire. In the appealing *Schiff* composition, seven-year-old Mortimer Leo and eight-year-old Frieda Fanny are presented full-length, three-quarters to the right, with his head in profile and hers in three-quarter view. The children are depicted walking hand-in-hand, while Frieda holds by the collar a Scottish deerhound (the Saint-Gaudens family pet, Dunrobin), which unifies and balances the composition.¹⁸⁶ The trio is poised on a plinth between Corinthian pilasters and under a cornice from which hangs a garland of flowers, ribbons, and acorns. An inscription above the children's heads identifies their names and ages.

The *Schiff* portrait is remarkable for the variation in technical approaches to relief sculpture, from the delicate sketchy treatment of Dunrobin's wiry fur to tight modeling of Mortimer's fully formed foot that extends over the edge of the plinth into the viewer's space. Although *The Schiff Children* measures no more than several inches in depth, Saint-Gaudens gave the illusion of three-dimensional space by framing the children within a classicizing structure and arranging the dog so that his right hindquarter and curling tail appear in front of the left pilaster. The undulating background, a recurring device in the sculptor's reliefs, also enhances the varying degree of depth, as does the deep undercutting in the pleats of Frieda's skirt. Overall, *The Schiff Children* was modeled in a higher, more polished style than Saint-Gaudens's friendship reliefs of the late 1870s. While it departed in scale and degree of relief from these earlier panels, it represents a summation of the decorative style that the sculptor pursued in the early and mid-1880s.

Saint-Gaudens cast *The Schiff Children* in bronze in 1885 for the Schiff family's Oyster Bay, Long Island, home. Although the portrait was a commission, it served as a commanding showpiece for the sculptor. It was the largest work he had exhibited to date, with the exception of the *Farragut* model in 1880. In the Society exhibition, the *Schiff Children* was installed in the center of the long gallery, facing Chase's pastel portrait of a woman in a white dress. These large works, one writer observed, were "by two of the representative men of the Society."¹⁸⁷ Praise for the *Schiff* portrait was universal and was a highlight of the Society's exhibition reviews. In fact, sculptors, save Saint-Gaudens, received far more limited comment than in previous years, perhaps explaining in part why his sculpture was discussed in context with the paintings. The *Daily Tribune*

observed that portraits by Chase, Saint-Gaudens, Sargent, Thayer, and Weir “call for conspicuous mention.” In discussing the works in turn, the writer found that these artists shared a common ability to create “portraiture expressive of individual character and invested with appropriate sentiment.”¹⁸⁸

A prevailing theme in the reviews was Saint-Gaudens’s ability to successfully assimilate in his work varied formal traits—decorativeness, pictorialism, and a seamless melding of alto- and bas-relief. One also senses in the writing an acceptance, if not expectation, that the sculptor produce works in this style. As noted by the same critic for the *Daily Tribune*:

The group has been modelled in higher relief than is usual in the work sent by this sculptor to the exhibitions. His decorative tendency shows itself in the ornamentation of the costumes, and in other points, but this is not permitted to override the larger feeling of the group. The manliness of the boy, the shy beauty of the girl, and even the true action of the faithful dog will be noted before the work done in obedience to pictorial necessities.¹⁸⁹

John R. Tait wrote for the *Mail and Express*: “Augustus Saint-Gaudens exhibits a pictorial bas-relief . . . It is a portrait group of children—brother and sister, very happy in composition, which is graceful and realistic, while the execution is both vigorous and refined in style.”¹⁹⁰ Tait’s comment that the sculpture was “both vigorous and refined” is a particularly perceptive assessment of the stylistic duality of the sculptor’s modeling techniques. Finally, Van Rensselaer remained a loyal advocate, calling the *Schiff Children* “one of the two or three most important works of all.” She then proceeded to describe the character of the work and promote the talent of the sculptor in most forthright and complimentary terms. These terms arguably border on hyperbole and substantiate the mutual friendship between artist and writer and their shared goals for the advancement of American sculpture to an international plain:

Mr. St. Gaudens's beautiful bas-relief of two children and their dog . . . is an example of the most tender and exquisite side of a talent which has other and very different moods, but in them all reveals itself as the strongest, the most individual, the most thoroughly artistic that has ever been bestowed upon an American sculptor. Nay, to say this does not say all one might or should; for it is not with American sculptors so much as with the very best artists of the great modern school—the school of France—that Mr. St. Gaudens should be compared.¹⁹¹

Critical discussion of the other sculptures was unusually brief and nondescript.

Warner, a distant second in critical attention, drew only a few reviews for his bust of Brownell. George Gurney has hypothesized that perhaps writers hesitated to remark on a bust of a fellow critic.¹⁹² What little commentary he received was positive. The *Herald* called it “good” while Van Rensselaer found it to have “great vitality and great refinement.”¹⁹³ Tait of the *Mail and Express*, who offered the most extensive analysis of the Society's sculpture, called it “a capital work.” He noted: “It has a simplicity of technique which must have cost the artist infinite pains—of which, however, the traces have been skillfully concealed. The head is admirably posed upon the neck, so as even to suggest the shoulders which are not given.”¹⁹⁴ Commentary on the remaining sculptures by O'Donovan, Natorp, and Elwell was lukewarm, if not disapproving. Elwell earned notice for his flair in modeling in his bust of Job. One critic deemed the head “artistic, but repulsive,” while Tait aptly observed that Elwell's style was “more modern in treatment and method. . . . [Job] exhibits a rather flamboyant ‘chic.’”¹⁹⁵ However, Elwell's nude youth *Aqua Viva* (1884; The Metropolitan Museum of Art), on display in a nearby museum gallery, drew greater attention from the press than did his *Job*.¹⁹⁶

The 1886 Society exhibition represented a transitional moment for sculpture in the history of the organization. Its earlier years were dominated by the likes of Saint-Gaudens, Warner, and O'Donovan. In contrast, by the late 1880s, a new generation of

younger, French-trained sculptors earned critical notice for their work through the Society exhibitions. At the same time, Saint-Gaudens, who had shunned displaying his work at the National Academy, returned to exhibiting there in 1888. He continued to sporadically display significant sculpture at the Society, while consistently remaining involved in the overall selection of works. As the next chapter will demonstrate, by the late 1880s, one observes a perceptible shift in Saint-Gaudens's relationship with the Society, and indeed art venues in general. He evolved from an artist seeking to build his reputation to one lending cachet and upholding his status as the country's foremost sculptor.

Notes to Chapter 4

¹ On the Sherwood Studio Building, see John Davis, "'Our United Happy Family': Artists in the Sherwood Studio Building, 1880-1900," *Archives of American Art Journal* 36, nos. 3-4 (1996): 2-19. The author documents Saint-Gaudens as a resident from 1880 to 1882.

² Homer Saint-Gaudens, ed., *The Reminiscences of Augustus Saint-Gaudens* (New York: Century Co., 1913), 1:272 (hereafter cited as *Reminiscences*).

³ "Reminiscences of an Idiot," Saint-Gaudens Papers, Dartmouth College Library, Hanover, N.H., microfilm reel 36, frame 593 (hereafter cited as Saint-Gaudens Papers, DCL).

⁴ Bion to Saint-Gaudens, 18 October 1881, original letter, Saint-Gaudens Papers, DCL; English translation, Saint-Gaudens National Historic Site, Cornish, New Hampshire.

⁵ On the Oliver II and Oakes Ames monument, see John H. Dryfhout, *The Work of Augustus Saint-Gaudens* (Hanover, N.H.: University Press of New England, 1982), 122; "American Art Chronicle: Monuments," *American Art Review* 1 (February 1880): 177; and "Art Notes," *Art Journal* (New York) 7 (November 1881): 352. The monument, completed in October 1882, was erected at the highest point on the Union Pacific Railroad line.

⁶ See Dryfhout, *The Work of Augustus Saint-Gaudens*, 9, 136-37, no. 106.

⁷ Among these portraits were those of Josiah G. Holland (1881); Helen Parrish Lee and Sarah Redwood Lee (1881); Samuel Gray Ward (1881); and several members of the Cornelius Vanderbilt family (1882). The sculptor wrote Richard Watson Gilder in 1881 that he charged \$500 for a portrait similar to that of Gilder's son, Rodman. See Saint-Gaudens to Gilder, September 1881 (draft or copy), Saint-Gaudens Papers, DCL, microfilm reel 7, frame 524.

⁸ Augusta Saint-Gaudens to Mrs. Thomas Homer, 6 February [1880], Saint-Gaudens Papers, DCL, microfilm reel 20, frame 146. See also Joyce Karen Schiller, "The Artistic Collaboration of Augustus Saint-Gaudens and Stanford White" (Ph.D. diss., Washington University, Saint Louis, 1997), 28.

⁹ "Art in the Cities: New York," *Art Journal* (New York) 6 (August 1880): 254.

¹⁰ "Notes and Clippings: The Farragut Statue," *American Architect and Building News* 8 (31 July 1880): 57.

¹¹ "American Art Chronicle: Monuments," *American Art Review* 1 (August 1880): 454. The *American Art Review* was published and edited by Sylvester Rosa Koehler between 1879 and 1881. It was a high-quality scholarly publication that published original

etchings by American artists. Its impressive stable of writers included George Parsons Lathrop, S. G. W. Benjamin, Mariana Van Rensselaer, and Charles Eliot Norton. See Helene Emylou Roberts, "American Art Periodicals of the Nineteenth Century," (Master's thesis, University of Washington, 1961), 95-97.

¹² See Lois Goldreich Marcus, "Studies in Nineteenth-Century Sculpture: Augustus Saint-Gaudens (1848-1907)" (Ph.D. diss., City University of New York, 1979), 33-102; and Schiller, "The Artistic Collaboration of Augustus Saint-Gaudens and Stanford White," 62-166.

¹³ On the siting of the *Farragut Monument*, see *Reminiscences*, 1:231-33, 238-39; and Schiller, "The Artistic Collaboration of Augustus Saint-Gaudens and Stanford White," 115-29.

¹⁴ "Notes," *Art Journal* (New York) 6 (November 1880): 352.

¹⁵ Editorial, *New York Times*, 5 October 1880, 4; reprinted in "Monuments," *American Art Review* 2 (November 1880): 41. The "great Exposition" to which the author erroneously refers is the Salon of 1880 where Saint-Gaudens received an honorable mention.

¹⁶ See, for instance, Wayne Craven, *Sculpture in America* (1968; rev. ed., Newark: University of Delaware Press; New York and London: Cornwall Books, 1984), 382: "As a band played military music and cannon[s] were discharged nearby, the covering fell away to reveal what marked a new era in American sculpture"; and Kathryn Greenthal, *Augustus Saint-Gaudens: Master Sculptor*, exh. cat. (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1985), 93: "With its successful reception, his renown as a sculptor was established and began immediately to broaden."

¹⁷ Lorado Taft, *The History of American Sculpture* (New York and London: Macmillan, 1903), 288.

¹⁸ *Reminiscences*, 1:264.

¹⁹ Marc Simpson, with Richard Ormond and H. Barbara Weinberg, *Uncanny Spectacle: The Public Career of the Young John Singer Sargent*, exh. cat. (New Haven and London: Yale University Press; Williamstown, Mass.: Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute, 1997), 39.

²⁰ The most thorough account of the unveiling ceremony is found in "Farragut: The Admiral's Statue Unveiled in Madison Square," *New York Herald*, 26 May 1881, 5. This was the third of three lengthy articles on the sculpture published by the *Herald* (May 20, 25, and 26).

²¹ "The Fine Arts: Farragut's Monument," *Critic* 1 (18 June 1881): 167. The writer then allowed: "Of private remark adverse to it there have been some echoes." These concerned the unflinching realism of the portrayal, which some felt should have been more idealized. The article also criticized the lack of landscaping and the necessity for a gravel path leading to the monument, a situation that displeased the sculptor as well. After the May unveiling, Saint-Gaudens lobbied furiously for a narrow gravel path from the street sidewalk to the monument in order to provide viewers with access to the monument and use of the seat, a request that was never accommodated.

²² M. G. Van Rensselaer, "Mr. St. Gaudens's Statue of Admiral Farragut in New York," *American Architect and Building News* 10 (10 September 1881): 119. By technical "criticisms," Van Rensselaer was using the word in its evaluative, not negative sense.

²³ "The Farragut Statue," *New York Herald*, 25 May 1881, 4.

²⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁵ "The Fine Arts: St. Gaudens's Farragut," *Critic* 1 (21 May 1881): 138.

²⁶ "St. Gaudens's 'Farragut,'" *New York Daily Tribune*, 25 May 1881, 5.

²⁷ "The Farragut Statue," *New York Times*, 25 May 1881, 4.

²⁸ Schiller, "The Artistic Collaboration of Augustus Saint-Gaudens and Stanford White," 4.

²⁹ "Fine Arts: The Farragut Statue—History of the Work and Some Detail Previous to Critical Notice," *New York Herald*, 20 May 1881, 8.

³⁰ *Critic* 1 (21 May 1881): 138.

³¹ *New York Daily Tribune*, 25 May 1881, 5.

³² *New York Times*, 25 May 1881, 4.

³³ [William C. Brownell], "St. Gaudens' Statue of Farragut," *Nation* 32 (2 June 1881): 390. The identification of Brownell as author is from Daniel C. Haskell, *The Nation: Index of Titles and Contributors* (New York: New York Public Library, 1953), 2:63.

³⁴ "Art Notes: The Farragut Statue," *Art Journal* (New York) 7 (August 1881): 254.

³⁵ *New York Herald*, 20 May 1881, 8.

³⁶ *New York Times*, 25 May 1881, 4; and *Art Journal* 7 (August 1881): 255.

³⁷ *New York Daily Tribune*, 25 May 1881, 5.

³⁸ [Richard Watson Gilder]. "The Farragut Monument." *Scribner's Monthly* 22 (June 1881): 161-67.

³⁹ Marcus. "Studies in Nineteenth-Century American Sculpture." 61. Clippings are preserved in the Saint-Gaudens Papers, DCL.

⁴⁰ Saint-Gaudens to Gilder, 4 April 1881, Saint-Gaudens Papers, DCL, microfilm reel 7, frames 520-21.

⁴¹ Arthur John, *The Best Years of the "Century": Richard Watson Gilder, Scribner's Monthly, and Century Magazine, 1870-1909* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1981), 83.

⁴² On this ongoing quest for public sculpture in New York City, see Thayer Tolles, "Modeling a Reputation: The American Sculptor and New York City," in Catherine Hoover Voorsanger and John K. Howat, eds., *Art and the Empire City, New York, 1825-1861*, exh. cat. (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2000), 135-67.

⁴³ [Gilder], *Scribner's Monthly* 22 (June 1881): 162. The only New York monuments Gilder singled out for praise (166) were Henry Kirke Brown's *George Washington* (1856; Union Square) and John Quincy Adams Ward's *Indian Hunter* (1866; Central Park).

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 163.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 164.

⁴⁸ M. G. Van Rensselaer, "Mr. St. Gaudens's Statue of Admiral Farragut in New York," *American Architect and Building News* 10 (10 September 1881): 119-20.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 119.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

⁵¹ Weir to Saint-Gaudens, [spring 1880], Saint-Gaudens Papers, DCL, microfilm reel 13, frame 807. I have not been able to document the exact date of his election as president.

⁵² Appendix C, "List of Members and Dates of Election: 1877-1885," in Jennifer A. Martin Bienenstock, "The Formation and Early Years of the Society of American Artists: 1877-1884" (Ph.D. diss., City University of New York, 1983), 407-8.

⁵³ The exhibition committee for the 1881 exhibition consisted of Saint-Gaudens, Frederick Dielman, William Gedney Bunce, J. Alden Weir, William Merritt Chase, Thomas Wilmer Dewing, Will H. Low, Abbott Thayer, Olin Warner, and Frank Millet. See "Art Notes," *Art Journal* (New York) 7 (February 1881): 64.

⁵⁴ *Society of American Artists Fourth Annual Exhibition* (New York, 1881), 10-12.

⁵⁵ The vague description of the relief in the criticism of the 1881 Society exhibition prevents a firm identification. Only Charles de Kay offered any clue: "A plaster cast of a bas-relief of a young girl is wonderfully delicate in the lines of the profile and the back of the neck; the portrait has a most high-bred look, whether the sitter had it or not." See [Charles de Kay], "The Chisel and Graver. Exhibition of the Society of American Artists," *New York Times*, 14 April 1881, 5.

⁵⁶ *Museum of Fine Arts: Exhibition of Works by Living American Artists* (Boston, 1880), 29, nos. 1-5. A bronze medallion of Frank Millet and the marble bust of Theodore Woolsey were also included.

⁵⁷ Saint-Gaudens to Charles Loring, 25 January 1881, Director's Correspondence, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C., microfilm reel 550, frame 578. At Loring's insistence, the catalogue was to indicate the owner of the *Bastien-Lepage* as the Boston Museum; this request went unheeded in the first edition of the catalogue, but was remedied in a subsequent edition. Saint-Gaudens to Loring, 5 March 1881, microfilm reel 550, frame 581; and Saint-Gaudens to Loring, 5 April 1881, microfilm reel 550, frame 582.

⁵⁸ On *Dancing Nymph* and its reception at the 1881 exhibition, see George Gurney, "Olin Levi Warner: A Catalogue Raisonné of His Sculpture and Graphic Works" (Ph.D. diss., University of Delaware, 1978), 484-88.

⁵⁹ S. G. W. Benjamin, "The Exhibitions: VIII, Society of American Artists. Fourth Annual Exhibition," *American Art Review* 2 (June 1881): 77. On the *Morgan*, see Gurney, "Olin Levi Warner," 460-66.

⁶⁰ Bienenstock, "The Formation and Early Years of the Society of American Artists," 120-21. In 1889, Davis presented *Joan of Arc* to the Metropolitan Museum of Art at Saint-Gaudens's "earnest recommendation" (*Reminiscences*, 1:215). See also Katharine Baetjer, *European Paintings in The Metropolitan Museum of Art by Artists Born Before 1865: A Summary Catalogue* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1995), 489.

⁶¹ "Bastien Lepage," *Scribner's Monthly* 22 (June 1881): 230-35. The presence of wood engravings in Society exhibitions is discussed in Bienenstock, "The Formation and Early Years of the Society of American Artists," 103-4. She notes that engravers such as Juengling and Timothy Cole pursued a looser new aesthetic in which strict adherence to

line was abandoned in favor of tone and textural effects, paralleling stylistic developments in painting.

⁶² According to the *Reminiscences*, the two artists renewed their acquaintance in the late 1870s, and Bastien-Lepage "asked if I would make a medallion of him in exchange for a portrait of myself. Of course I agreed to the proposal" (1:215). Bastien painted a full-length portrait sketch, which was destroyed in the Cornish studio fire in 1904. For further discussion of the *Bastien-Lepage*, see Thayer Tolles, ed. *American Sculpture in The Metropolitan Museum of Art. Volume 1. A Catalogue of Works by Artists Born before 1865* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1999), 264-66; Dryfhout, *The Work of Augustus Saint-Gaudens*, 107-8, no. 87; and Kathryn Greenthal, Paula M. Kozol, and Jan Seidler Ramirez, *American Figurative Sculpture in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston* (Boston: Museum of Fine Arts, 1986), 222-25.

⁶³ Greenthal, *American Figurative Sculpture in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston*, 224. John Dryfhout has also postulated that the figure "refers to Bastien-Lepage's original statement of 'truth,' a painting of a nude destroyed in the Franco-Prussian War of 1870." See John Dryfhout, "Augustus Saint-Gaudens: The Portraits in Bas-Relief," *American Art Journal* 4 (November 1972): 88.

⁶⁴ *Reminiscences*, 1:216, 219.

⁶⁵ On the *Gilder* relief, see Tolles, ed., *American Sculpture in The Metropolitan Museum of Art. Volume 1*, 257-59; and Dryfhout, *The Work of Augustus Saint-Gaudens*, 103, no. 83.

⁶⁶ The relief clearly pleased the Gilders, for when they remodeled their home in 1880 the sculptor's brother Louis St. Gaudens enlarged the relief in cast cement (private collection) for placement on the façade. See Gurney, "Olin Levi Warner," 475-76. Warner executed a companion plaque of Rodman's sister Marion, who had died in infancy.

⁶⁷ Saint-Gaudens to Augusta Saint-Gaudens [undated], Saint-Gaudens Papers, DCL, microfilm reel 21, frame 597.

⁶⁸ *Reminiscences*, 2:23.

⁶⁹ On *Shiff*, see Dryfhout, *The Work of Augustus Saint-Gaudens*, 105, no. 85; and John M. Hunisak, *Carvings, Casts & Replicas: Nineteenth-Century Sculpture from Europe & America in New England Collections*, exh. cat. (Middlebury, Vt.: Middlebury College Museum of Art, 1994), 137-38.

⁷⁰ Dryfhout, *The Work of Augustus Saint-Gaudens*, 105.

⁷¹ *Reminiscences*, 1:114.

⁷² On *The Children of Prescott Hall Butler*, see Tolles, ed., *American Sculpture in The Metropolitan Museum of Art. Volume 1*, 267-69; and Ruth Butler et al., *European Sculpture of the Nineteenth Century* (Washington, D.C.: National Gallery of Art, 2000), 454-59, a catalogue entry by Alison Luchs on a plaster version of the *Butler Children*.

⁷³ Saint-Gaudens to Augusta Homer, 17 March 1875, Saint-Gaudens Papers, DCL, microfilm reel 21, frame 155.

⁷⁴ Saint-Gaudens to Gilder, 21 February 1881, Saint-Gaudens Papers, DCL, microfilm reel 7, frames 478-79.

⁷⁵ See Sally Webster, *William Morris Hunt, 1824-1879* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991), esp. 76, 82-83, 122; and William Morris Hunt, *Talks on Art* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1875 and 1883).

⁷⁶ [Clarence Cook], "Academy of Design: Fifty-first Annual Exhibition," *New York Daily Tribune*, 22 April 1876, 7.

⁷⁷ Bienenstock, "The Formation and Early Years of the Society of American Artists," 22.

⁷⁸ S. G. W. Benjamin, "The Exhibitions: VIII, Society of American Artists. Fourth Annual Exhibition," *American Art Review* 2 (June 1881): 71.

⁷⁹ "The Society Exhibition," *New York Evening Post*, 28 March 1881, 4.

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ Benjamin, *American Art Review* 2 (June 1881): 77.

⁸² [Clarence Cook], "Among the Artists: Society of American Artists Fourth Annual Exhibition," *New York Daily Tribune*, 27 March 1881, 2.

⁸³ Ibid. Cook argued that Morgan's portrait should be acquired in the more permanent medium of bronze, rather than in plaster, as the Boston Museum had done. Following Warner's premature death in 1896, the Metropolitan Museum, through the auspices of the National Sculpture Society, acquired numerous bronzes cast posthumously from the sculptor's studio plasters, including a cast of *Maud Morgan*. See Tolles, ed., *American Sculpture in The Metropolitan Museum of Art. Volume 1*, 216.

⁸⁴ This observation is expounded on extensively by Warner's staunch advocate de Kay in *New York Times*, 14 April 1881, 5.

⁸⁵ [William C. Brownell], "Fine Arts: Fourth Annual Exhibition of the Society of American Artists," *Nation* 32 (7 April 1881): 250. Interestingly, in the contemplative quality of *Maud Morgan*, Brownell found "a clear spiritual kinship" with Thomas

Eakins's *Singing a Pathetic Song* (1881; Corcoran Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.), also in the Society exhibition. Authorship of the article to Brownell is from Haskell, *The Nation: Index of Titles and Contributors*, 2:63.

⁸⁶ Benjamin, *American Art Review* 2 (June 1881): 77.

⁸⁷ [Cook], *New York Daily Tribune*, 27 March 1881, 2.

⁸⁸ "The Fine Arts: The Society of American Artists," *Critic* 1 (9 April 1881): 99.

⁸⁹ In the 1881 Society exhibition Eaton displayed four female portraits (one of them was in crayon) while Thayer exhibited six portraits. See *Society of American Artists Fourth Annual Exhibition*, 6, 7, 9-11.

⁹⁰ [Brownell], *Nation* 32 (7 April 1881): 250.

⁹¹ [De Kay], *New York Times*, 14 April 1881, 5.

⁹² Edward Strahan [Earl Shinn], "Exhibition of the Society of American Artists," *Art Amateur* 4 (May 1881): 118. The *Quartley* bust was not listed in the exhibition catalogue, but was discussed in several reviews. See also Bienenstock, "The Formation and Early Years of the Society of American Artists," 366, 404.

⁹³ S. G. W. Benjamin, "The Exhibitions: VIII, Society of American Artists. Fourth Annual Exhibition," *American Art Review* 2 (June 1881): 77.

⁹⁴ [Brownell], *Nation* 32 (7 April 1881): 250. De Kay, too, found fault with O'Donovan, calling him "remarkable for hinting beautiful work, but not carrying it out successfully. His touch is that of a person who needs a daily dose of galvanic shocks to bring him into the realm of the real." See [de Kay], *New York Times*, 14 April 1881, 5.

⁹⁵ On O'Donovan as a writer, especially in the early 1870s, see Virginia Baird Kelly, "William Rudolf O'Donovan and the Business, Politics and Art of Sculpture" (Master's thesis, Syracuse University, 1992), 20-28. O'Donovan contributed articles to the *New York Herald* and *Lippincott's Monthly Magazine* among other publications.

⁹⁶ French studied in New York with John Quincy Adams Ward in spring 1870. Later he visited the city frequently, maintaining contact with artists there, notably Abbott Thayer. French was elected to membership in the Society on May 6, 1882.

⁹⁷ Benjamin, *American Art Review* 2 (June 1881): 77. French's other submission was a bust of author James Elliott Cabot (1880-81; marble, Boston Athenaeum).

⁹⁸ Quoted in Walter Tittle, "A Sculptor of the Spirit of America: Daniel Chester French Put National Character into Marble," *World's Work* 56 (July 1928): 304. French's response to the 1881 Society exhibition, captured in a letter to his brother, is revealing:

"It was worthy of a visit. Those fellows are somewhat cracked I think, but the collection was interesting. I do not believe in the impressionist school when carried as far as some of the Soc. artists do." See French to William M. R. French, 3 May 1881, Daniel Chester French Family Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C., microfilm reel 40, frame 374.

⁹⁹ On the composition of each segment, see Bienenstock, "The Formation and Early Years of the Society of American Artists," 132-34.

¹⁰⁰ See, for instance, "Fine Arts: The Society of American Artists," *New York Mail and Express*, 1 May 1882, 3. It notes that Louis St. Gaudens's *Piping Pan* now occupied a niche to great effect. *Homer Saint-Gaudens* was installed in the larger gallery during both installations. Its placement is recorded in "The Society of American Artists. III," *New York World*, 1 May 1882, 2.

¹⁰¹ "Monthly Record of American Art," *Magazine of Art* 5 (1882): xxvi.

¹⁰² Little is known of Eugene Pfister, a New York sculptor who exhibited just once with the Society of American Artists. Edward Spring studied with Henry Kirke Brown, John Quincy Adams Ward, and William Rimmer. He specialized in terra cotta work, and was involved in the establishment of the Perth Amboy Terra Cotta Company in 1877. See Glenn B. Opitz, ed., *Dictionary of American Sculptors: "18th Century to the Present"* (Poughkeepsie, N.Y.: Apollo, 1984), 379. On Louis St. Gaudens, see Tolles, *American Sculpture in The Metropolitan Museum of Art. Volume 1*, 350.

¹⁰³ "The Society of American Artists," *New York Sun*, 9 April 1882, 2.

¹⁰⁴ The most striking non-exhibited examples are *Helen Parrish Lee* and *Sarah Redwood Lee* and *Sarah Redwood Lee* (both 1881; Mount Saint Mary's College, Emmitsburg, Md.). See Dryfhout, *The Work of Augustus Saint-Gaudens*, 118-19, nos. 93-94.

¹⁰⁵ *Society of American Artists Fifth Annual Exhibition* (New York, 1882), 14, nos. 92-94. The owner of *Gertrude Vanderbilt* was the sitter's father, Cornelius Vanderbilt II.

¹⁰⁶ McKim, Mead & White designed Ward's house, "Oakwood," in Lenox, Massachusetts, in 1880. On the *Ward* relief, see Tolles, *American Sculpture in The Metropolitan Museum of Art. Volume 1*, 269-71; and Dryfhout, *The Work of Augustus Saint-Gaudens*, 120-21, no. 95.

¹⁰⁷ Saint-Gaudens wrote this statement on the back of a photograph of a circular version of the *Ward* portrait (unlocated) in the archives of the American Academy of Arts and Letters, New York. Quoted in Dryfhout, *The Work of Augustus Saint-Gaudens*, 33 n. 30.

¹⁰⁸ For the mantelpiece, see Tolles, *American Sculpture in The Metropolitan Museum of Art. Volume 1*, 272-75; and especially James L. Yarnall, "Souvenirs of Splendor: John La

Farge and the Patronage of Cornelius Vanderbilt II," *American Art Journal* 26 (1994): 66-105. See also John H. Dryfhout, "Augustus Saint-Gaudens' *Actaeon* and the Cornelius Vanderbilt II Mansion," *J. B. Speed Art Museum Bulletin* 31 (September 1976): 2-13; and Russell Sturgis, "A Review of the Work of George B. Post," *Architectural Record*, no. 4 (June 1898).

¹⁰⁹ La Farge's drawing for *Bacchus* is in the collection of the Addison Gallery of American Art, Phillips Academy, Andover, Massachusetts.

¹¹⁰ "Art Notes," *Art Journal* (New York) 7 (October 1881): 318. For an extended contemporaneous assessment of the interior decorative scheme, which mentions Saint-Gaudens's contributions, see Mary Gay Humphreys, "The Cornelius Vanderbilt House," *Art Amateur* 8 (May 1883): 135-36. She observed, "Mr. St. Gaudens, who has done so much that is enjoyable, has achieved nothing more delightful than these panels [figures of Ceres, Pomona, Bacchus, and Actaeon]. The Ceres is somewhat unusual in treatment, and the others have the impress not only of individuality, but of an individuality in which frankness and freedom, delicacy and restraint, are happily blended" (135). Humphreys also discussed Saint-Gaudens and the ceiling panels in context of the American Aesthetic Movement in "The Progress of American Decorative Art," *Art Journal*, no. 1 (January 1884): 28. An engraving after the *Bacchus* panel is illustrated.

¹¹¹ The other portraits were a double one of Gertrude's brothers William Henry II and Cornelius II (1882; plaster, Saint-Gaudens National Historic Site) and a posthumous one of "Commodore" Cornelius Vanderbilt I (1882; plaster, Saint-Gaudens National Historic Site), the grandfather of Cornelius II. The boys' portrait is framed vertically with shields decorated with oak leaves and acorns, symbols from the Vanderbilt family coat of arms, while Cornelius Vanderbilt is posed against a compressed background of oak leaves and acorns. For illustrations, see Henry J. Duffy and John H. Dryfhout, *Augustus Saint-Gaudens: American Sculptor of the Gilded Age*, exh. cat. (Washington, D.C.: Trust for Museum Exhibitions in cooperation with Saint-Gaudens National Historic Site, Cornish, N.H., 2003), 30-31. For others planned, but not completed, see *Reminiscences*, 1:349.

¹¹² *Magazine of Art* 5 (1882): xxvi; and "Fine Arts: Fifth Annual Exhibition of the Society of American Artists. Second Notice," *New York Herald*, 8 April 1882, 5.

¹¹³ [Clarence Cook], "Society of American Artists: Fifth Annual Exhibition," *New York Daily Tribune*, 9 April 1882, 7.

¹¹⁴ M. G. Van Rensselaer, "The Society of American Artists, New York.—I," *American Architect and Building News* 11 (13 May 1882): 220.

¹¹⁵ "Society of American Artists: Second Exhibition—I," *New York World*, 8 May 1882, 2.

¹¹⁶ "The Society of American Artists," *New York Sun*, 16 April 1882, 5.

¹¹⁷ See *Reminiscences*, 1:161-62; and Dryfhout, *The Work of Augustus Saint-Gaudens*, 32.

¹¹⁸ "The American Artists' Exhibition," *Art Amateur* 6 (May 1882): 115; Van Rensselaer, *American Architect and Building News* 11 (13 May 1882): 220; and [Cook], *New York Daily Tribune*, 9 April 1882, 7.

¹¹⁹ *New York World*, 1 May 1882, 2.

¹²⁰ Van Rensselaer, *American Architect and Building News* 11 (13 May 1882): 220.

¹²¹ [Cook], *New York Daily Tribune*, 9 April 1882, 7. Cook later elaborated on his distaste of such "affectation" that "appears . . . [in] his smaller works, his bas-reliefs with their unreadable inscriptions, and oddities of arrangement, and in the decorative work which he has done in conjunction with others." See [Clarence Cook], "Some Recent Statues," *Studio*, n.s., 1 (2 August 1884): 4.

¹²² [Cook], *New York Daily Tribune*, 9 April 1882, 7.

¹²³ *New York Sun*, 16 April 1882, 5.

¹²⁴ On *Piping Pan*, see Tolles, ed., *American Sculpture in The Metropolitan Museum of Art. Volume 1*, 351-52.

¹²⁵ "The Fine Arts: The Society of American Artists," *Critic* 2 (22 April 1882): 120.

¹²⁶ *New York Sun*, 16 April 1882, 5.

¹²⁷ [Cook], *New York Daily Tribune*, 9 April 1882, 7.

¹²⁸ Unlike Saint-Gaudens, Warner consistently sent portraits to the National Academy exhibitions, reserving his ideal subjects for the Society. In the 1882 annual, he showed a bust of the late Mr. [Ivory] Chamberlain (1882 or before; unlocated). See *Catalogue of the Fifty-seventh Annual Exhibition of the National Academy of Design 1882* (New York, 1882), 41, no. 839; and Gurney, "Olin Levi Warner," 489-90.

¹²⁹ Van Rensselaer offered clarification: "It was very evidently Venus or a nymph, with the baby Cupid, into whom, in later Greek mythology, the lover of Psyche was transformed." See Van Rensselaer, *American Architect and Building News* 11 (13 May 1882): 220. Warner's biographer disagrees and suggests that it is a believable representation of the Cupid and Psyche theme. On the panel, see Gurney, "Olin Levi Warner," 494-99.

¹³⁰ See [Mariana Van Rensselaer]. "Society of American Artists. Second Exhibition.—I." *New York World*, 8 May 1882, 2; and Van Rensselaer, *American Architect and Building News* 11 (13 May 1882): 220.

¹³¹ [Cook], *New York Daily Tribune*, 9 April 1882, 7.

¹³² Warner's first two major public commissions were seated statues of Governor William A. Buckingham for the State Capitol in Hartford, Connecticut (awarded 1882; unveiled 1884) and William Lloyd Garrison for Commonwealth Avenue in Boston (awarded 1883; installed 1886).

¹³³ Saint-Gaudens to J[ames] L. Claghorn, President, Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, 7 January 1877, Archives, Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, Philadelphia. See also *Catalogue of the Forty-eighth Annual Exhibition of the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, 1877* (Philadelphia, 1877), 37, no. 204a (*Woolsey*); and 40, no. 266 (*Evarts*). I am grateful to Cheryl Leibold, Archivist, Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, for her assistance in researching this loan.

¹³⁴ *Museum of Fine Arts: Exhibition of Works by Living American Artists* (Boston, 1880), 29, nos. 1-5.

¹³⁵ Saint-Gaudens to Augusta Saint-Gaudens, [October 1880], Saint-Gaudens Papers, DCL, microfilm reel 21, frame 624.

¹³⁶ "The Museum Exhibition," *Boston Daily Advertiser*, 17 November 1880, 2.

¹³⁷ See "Notes on Art," *New York Times*, 18 February 1881, 2. The *Bastien-Lepage* was cast at Rudier in Paris and was the same bronze that Saint-Gaudens had exhibited at the Paris Salon in 1880. See Saint-Gaudens to Charles Loring, 25 January 1881, Director's Correspondence, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, Archives of American Art, microfilm reel 550, frame 578.

¹³⁸ Saint-Gaudens to Loring, 18 December 1880, Director's Correspondence, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, Archives of American Art, microfilm reel 549, frame 1606.

¹³⁹ Saint-Gaudens to Loring, 25 January 1881, Director's Correspondence, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, Archives of American Art, microfilm reel 550, frame 578.

¹⁴⁰ See, for instance, "American Art Chronicle: Monuments," *American Art Review* 1 (December 1879): 88, which paraphrases from a report in the *Boston Daily Advertiser* about the progress in fundraising for the memorial.

¹⁴¹ Gregory C. Schwarz, "The Shaw Memorial: A History of the Monument," in *The Shaw Memorial: A Celebration of an American Masterpiece* (Cornish, N.H.: Eastern National for Saint-Gaudens National Historic Site, 2002), 20. See also *Reminiscences*, 1:332.

¹⁴² See, for instance, "Notes and Clippings: Monument to Abraham Lincoln," *American Architect and Building News* 9 (25 June 1881): 310, which reports that the will of Eli Bates includes a bequest of \$40,000 for a monument to President Lincoln; and "Notes and Clippings: Lincoln Memorials at Chicago," *American Architect and Building News* 11 (3 June 1882): 262, which states that designs from prominent sculptors have been solicited for a deadline of August 1.

¹⁴³ On Hallowell, see "Miss Sara Hallowell Unique in the Art World," *New York Times*, 31 December 1905, sec. 3, p. 6; John D. Kysela, "Sara Hallowell Brings 'Modern Art' to the Midwest," *Art Quarterly* 27, no. 2 (1964): 150-67; Carolyn Kinder Carr, "Prejudice and Pride: Presenting American Art at the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition," in *Revisiting the White City: American Art at the 1893 World's Fair*, exh. cat. (Washington, D.C.: National Museum of American Art and National Portrait Gallery, Smithsonian Institution, 1993), esp. 65-66; and Kirsten M. Jensen, "Her Sex was an Insuperable Objection: Sara Tyson Hallowell and the Art Institute of Chicago, 1873-1914" (Master's thesis, Southern Connecticut State University, 2000).

¹⁴⁴ See *Illustrated Catalogue of the Art Hall of the Inter-State Industrial Exposition of Chicago 1881* (Chicago, 1881), 13, nos. 76-80; and 104, no. 552.

¹⁴⁵ "The Exposition Open," *Chicago Daily Inter-Ocean*, 8 September 1881, 8.

¹⁴⁶ See Judith A. Barter et al., *American Arts at The Art Institute of Chicago from Colonial Times to World War I* (Chicago: Art Institute of Chicago, distributed by Hudson Hills Press, New York, 1998), 267-70; and "Art Notes," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 15 October 1881, 9. Andrew J. Walker kindly answered my questions about the Art Institute's *Bastien-Lepage*.

¹⁴⁷ "Art Matters," *Chicago Tribune*, 22 October 1882, 9.

¹⁴⁸ The exception was the Second Special Exhibition of the Art Club of Philadelphia in 1890 to which Saint-Gaudens submitted his portraits of General William Tecumseh Sherman and Robert Louis Stevenson. See Art Club of Philadelphia, *Second Special Exhibition, Catalogue of Exhibition* (Philadelphia, 1890), 54, no. 160. The *Stevenson* was not listed in the catalogue but was exhibited according to "The Philadelphia Art Club Exhibition," *Art Amateur* 24 (December 1890): 4. Saint-Gaudens was awarded the gold medal for sculpture while John Singer Sargent received the same honor for oil paintings for his *Portrait of a Boy* (fig. 62), depicting Homer and Augusta Saint-Gaudens.

¹⁴⁹ *Illustrated Catalogue of the Art Hall of the Inter-State Industrial Exposition of Chicago 1882* (Chicago, 1882), 34, nos. 302-4. Saint-Gaudens attracted limited published notice, as the press chose to focus on work by local talent. When younger Chicago sculptor John Donoghue was compared to Saint-Gaudens, it was noted that he "could

well afford to risk a contrast of his work alongside that of the mature and masterly St. Gaudens." See "Art at the Exposition," *Chicago Tribune*, 6 September 1882, 7.

¹⁵⁰ Museum of Fine Arts, *Catalogue of the Fifth Annual Exhibition of Contemporary American Art* (Boston, 1885), n.p., no. 201. See also Dryfhout, *The Work of Augustus Saint-Gaudens*, 145, no. 112. The work was given to Harvard in 1885 by Charles Sprague Sargent and others to commemorate Gray's seventy-fifth birthday. Critical opinion of the work varied widely from the *Boston Journal*, 15 May 1885, newspaper clippings scrapbook, vol. 1 (1869-1887), Archives, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, which considered it "one of this artist's best works," to "The Fine Arts: Sculpture in the Museum Exhibition," *Boston Daily Advertiser*, 16 May 1885, 4, which noted (accurately, it must be said) that the relief "does not present any particularly striking merits, and, considering the reputation of the artist, is a disappointment."

¹⁵¹ Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, *Catalogue, Fifty-sixth Annual Exhibition* (Philadelphia, 1885), 57, no. 645. See also Dryfhout, *The Work of Augustus Saint-Gaudens*, 147, no. 114. Reviews of the work by local Philadelphia press were terse, but unilaterally positive. For instance, the author of "The Academy Pictures," deemed it "worth very high praise, both as an example of admirable modelling and of happy characterization." See unannotated clipping in scrapbook, Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts Papers, Archives of American Art, microfilm reel P53, frame 359.

¹⁵² Saint-Gaudens to Charles Loring, 18 April 1881, Director's Correspondence, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, Archives of American Art, microfilm reel 550, frame 585.

¹⁵³ Society of American Artists, *Sixth Annual Exhibition, American Art Gallery* (New York, 1883), 25-26, nos. 143-48. Six works—by Henry Kirke Bush-Brown, Moses Ezekial, Jonathan Scott Hartley, Frederick William MacMonnies, Elizabeth Nourse, and Olin Warner—were included. Additionally, the painter John H. Niemeyer sent a bronze portrait relief of William Morris Hunt (unlocated). See "The Society of Artists: Some of the Features of Its Sixth Annual Exhibition," *New York Times*, 8 April 1883, 3.

¹⁵⁴ "The Society of American Artists: Sixth Annual Exhibition," *New York Daily Tribune*, 25 March 1883, 5.

¹⁵⁵ See "Fine Arts: The Sixth Annual Exhibition of the Society of American Artists," *New York Evening Post*, 13 April 1883, 4. The author of the article cited the primary reasons for a dearth in talent as the preferred French method of modeling clay in a picturesque style and the disinclination of sculptors to carve in marble.

¹⁵⁶ Clarence Cook, "Gallery and Studio: The Society of American Artists' Exhibition," *Art Amateur* 8 (May 1883): 125.

¹⁵⁷ On the identities of Chase's followers and their submissions, see Bienenstock, "The Formation and Early Years of the Society of American Artists," 171-72.

¹⁵⁸ "Art Notes," *New York Times*, 14 February 1884, 2.

¹⁵⁹ "Fine Arts: Seventh Annual Exhibition of the Society of American Artists," *New York Herald*, 25 May 1884, 8.

¹⁶⁰ "Fine Arts: Annual Display of the Society of American Artists," *New York Herald*, 26 May 1884, 6. Saint-Gaudens's resignation from the selection committee as an act of protest is also mentioned in J. M. T., "The American Artists' Exhibition," *Art Amateur* 11 (July 1884): 30. Saul E. Zalesch, in "Ryder Among the Writers: Friendship and Patronage in the New York Art World, 1875-1884" (Ph.D. diss., University of Delaware, 1992), 162, suggests that this author may be the painter John M. Tracy.

¹⁶¹ Saint-Gaudens to Eakins, ca. 27 May 1884, transcript in Lloyd Goodrich and Edith Havens Goodrich, Whitney Museum of American Art, Record of Works by Thomas Eakins, Philadelphia Museum of Art, quoted in Marc Simpson, "Eakins's Vision of the Past and the Building of a Reputation," in Darrel Sewell, ed., *Thomas Eakins*, exh. cat. (Philadelphia: Philadelphia Museum of Art in association with Yale University Press, 2001), 223. Saint-Gaudens replied: "I write simply to say that I am in no way responsible for the rejection of your charming little reliefs. I was astonished that they were not received when I saw them after their rejection—I resigned from the jury two months ago."

¹⁶² Montezuma [Montague Marks], "My Note Book," *Art Amateur* 11 (June 1884): 3. The exhibition included paintings by such historical painters as John Singleton Copley, Gilbert Stuart, Henry Inman, and John Vanderlyn and contemporary artists Chase, Weir, and George W. Maynard. London-born Marks established the *Art Amateur* in 1879 and served as its editor until 1897. During this time he authored the column "My Note Book," usually under the pseudonym "Montezuma." See "The Note-Book," *Art Amateur* 41 (June 1899): 2.

¹⁶³ For further information, see Dryfhout, *The Work of Augustus Saint-Gaudens*, 146, no. 113.

¹⁶⁴ "Reminiscences of an Idiot," Saint-Gaudens Papers, DCL, microfilm reel 36, frame 585; and *Reminiscences*, 1:272.

¹⁶⁵ Saint-Gaudens to Gilder, 17 November 1879, Richard Watson Gilder Papers, Manuscript Division, New York Public Library.

¹⁶⁶ Franklin H. North, "Sailors' Snug Harbor," *Century Magazine* 28 (June 1884): 192-201. The sculpture was not mentioned in the article. Cox's drawing, engraved for publication by John Henry Ellsworth Whitney, was praised as "excellent" in [Cook], *Studio*, n.s., 1 (2 August 1884): 3.

¹⁶⁷ *Art Year Book 1884* (Boston: New England Institute, 1884), n.p. The *Art Year Book* included Cox's drawing of the *Randall* sculpture that had been published in the *Century Magazine*. The complimentary nature of Saint-Gaudens's assessment perhaps should be considered in light of a review of the *Art Year Book* that accused the publication of "a grand glorification or 'beslobberation'—to coin a word—of every person or thing which has the fortune to be mentioned within its covers." See "An Art Year-Book," *American Architect and Building News* 16 (1 November 1884): 211.

¹⁶⁹ [Cook], *Studio*, n.s., 1 (2 August 1884): 3. Attribution of authorship to Cook is all but certain. If the cranky tone of the writing was not enough indication, the first three volumes of the new series of the *Studio* were written almost entirely by Cook. See John P. Simoni, "Art Critics and Criticism in Nineteenth Century America" (Ph.D. diss., Ohio State University, 1952), 353.

¹⁷⁰ [Cook], *Studio*, n.s., 1 (2 August 1884): 3.

¹⁷¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁷² See T[uman] H[owe] Bartlett, "Sitting Statues," *American Architect and Building News* 19 (20 February 1886): 87-88; 19 (27 February 1886): 101-2; 19 (12 June 1886): 279-81; and 20 (17 July 1886): 28-29. The last article mentions that the series was to be continued, but Bartlett produced no further articles on the topic.

¹⁷³ Bartlett's lukewarm response is not surprising for Warner had disappointed him by modeling the piece in New York rather than in Paris, following a trip abroad to study seated statues. See Bartlett, "Saint Gaudens [sic] as I knew him," Truman Howe Bartlett file, 1881-1922, Paul Wayland Bartlett Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, container 47. On Warner and Bartlett, see also Gurney, "Olin Levi Warner," 306-10, 544-45 n. 54.

¹⁷⁴ "The Fine Arts: Art Notes," *Critic* 5 (3 April 1886): 171.

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁶ Saint-Gaudens met Bartlett in 1869 while a student in Paris and briefly slept on a mattress on the floor of his studio. Bartlett apparently aided Saint-Gaudens in getting work as a cameo cutter, but felt that Saint-Gaudens consequently wronged him by not showing sufficient gratitude. In *Uncommon Clay: The Life and Works of Augustus Saint Gaudens* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1985), Burke Wilkinson portrays Bartlett as the esprit malin, basing his observations on Bartlett's vitriolic manuscript, "Saint Gaudens [sic] as I knew him" in which he devotes a large portion to maligning Saint-Gaudens by questioning his talents and moral rectitude. See Truman Howe Bartlett file, 1881-1922, Bartlett Papers, Library of Congress, container 47.

¹⁷⁷ "Criticism as Understood by the *Critic*," *American Architect and Building News* 19 (10 April 1886): 178.

¹⁷⁸ Ibid.

¹⁷⁹ "Fine Arts: The Coming Exhibition of the Society of American Artists," *New York Herald*, 30 April 1886, 8.

¹⁸⁰ Bienenstock, "The Formation and Early Years of the Society of American Artists," 175-76.

¹⁸¹ See, for instance, "At the Museum: Eighth Annual Exhibition of the Society of American Artists," *New York Herald*, 4 May 1886, 8; and "The Fine Arts: The Society of American Artists," *Critic* 5 (8 May 1886): 232.

¹⁸² See *Eighth Exhibition of the Society of American Artists* (New York, 1886), n.p., for a list of members. The last sculptor to be elected was Louis St. Gaudens on November 7, 1882.

¹⁸³ On Elwell, see Tolles, ed., *American Sculpture in The Metropolitan Museum of Art. Volume 1*, 365-66. Elwell was elected to membership in the Society in 1886. See "Art Notes," *Art Review* 1 (December 1886): 19-20. I was unable to locate any information on G. Natorp.

¹⁸⁴ For the Brownell portrait, see Gurney, "Olin Levi Warner," 584-89. For the Saint-Gaudens relief, see *Eighth Exhibition of the Society of American Artists*, 24, no. 93, as "Bas-relief Portraits," with the notation "Original, in bronze, owned by Jacob H. Schiff." On the medium of the relief exhibited in the Society show, see John R. Tait, "Fine Arts: Eighth Annual Exhibition of the Society of American Artists," *New York Mail and Express*, 24 May 1886, 3.

¹⁸⁵ On *The Schiff Children*, see Dryfhout, *The Work of Augustus Saint-Gaudens*, 152, no. 119; and Tolles, ed., *American Sculpture in The Metropolitan Museum of Art. Volume 1*, 283-85. The Metropolitan Museum has a marble version of 1906-7.

¹⁸⁶ The effectiveness of this compositional tactic was noted by the critic for the *Art Interchange*: "The little brother and sister . . . are seen in profile, walking slowly, and one of them holding by the collar the large hound that give the necessary balance to the composition." See "The Eighth Exhibition of the Society of American Artists," *Art Interchange* 16 (8 May 1886): 145.

¹⁸⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸⁸ "The Society of American Artists: Its Exhibition at the Metropolitan Museum," *New York Daily Tribune*, 4 May 1886, 5.

¹⁸⁹ Ibid.

¹⁹⁰ Tait, *New York Mail and Express*, 24 May 1886, 3.

¹⁹¹ Mrs. Schuyler Van Rensselaer, "Fine Arts: The Society of American Artists. II," *Independent* 8 (9 July 1886): 946. She also proclaimed the *Schiff Children* as "one of the two or three very best things." See M. G. Van Rensselaer, "Pictures of the Season in New York—VI," *American Architect and Building News* 20 (24 July 1886): 43.

¹⁹² Gurney, "Olin Levi Warner," 587.

¹⁹³ *New York Herald*, 4 May 1886, 8; and Van Rensselaer, *American Architect and Building News* 20 (24 July 1886): 43.

¹⁹⁴ Tait, *New York Mail and Express*, 24 May 1886, 3.

¹⁹⁵ *New York Herald*, 4 May 1886, 8; and Tait, *New York Mail and Express*, 24 May 1886, 3.

¹⁹⁶ See, for instance, *New York Daily Tribune*, 4 May 1886, 5; *New York Herald*, 4 May 1886, 8; and "Metropolitan Museum: The Summer Exhibition Opens with the Usual Reception," *New York Herald*, 5 May 1886, 8. *Aqua Viva* had previously been exhibited at the American Art Galleries in New York in November 1885.

Chapter 5

An Established Sculptor, A National Reputation: 1887-1892

1887 was a seminal year in Saint-Gaudens's career. Two monuments, *Abraham Lincoln: The Man (Standing Lincoln)* and *The Puritan (Deacon Samuel Chapin)* (figs. 49 and 50) were unveiled in October and November respectively. The sculptor was the subject of two appreciative and widely circulated articles by advocates Kenyon Cox and Mariana Griswold Van Rensselaer in the November issue of Richard Watson Gilder's *Century Magazine*. Further, Saint-Gaudens's reputation had broadened considerably beyond New York circles since the unveiling of the *Farragut Monument* in May 1881. His name was not only associated with an artist of considerable talent, but also with one whose participation and voice lent cachet and respect to any project with which he was associated.

The several examples that follow demonstrate Saint-Gaudens's leading status in the artistic community by the mid-1880s. Along with other prominent American artists, the sculptor became a vociferous opponent of the tariff on imported foreign works of art levied by the United States government in 1883.¹ In 1885, he was among a group of twenty artists, art collectors, and critics named to a New York branch of a planned National Society of Arts, the purpose of which was to promote the interests of art in the United States through education, exhibition, and collection.² In 1887, Saint-Gaudens, J. Alden Weir, and Frank Millet issued a circular to solicit American funds for the erection of a monument to the late Jules Bastien-Lepage in his hometown of Damvillers, France.³

And, in 1888, the sculptor was named to serve on the New York jury for the selection of American submissions to the Paris Exposition Universelle of 1889.⁴

Saint-Gaudens also was at the epicenter of New York's community of foreign-trained artists and architects and similarly minded patrons. Bowing to peer pressure from the likes of Stanford White, he became a "club man," regularly habiting the haunts of New York's artistic and cultural elite. These included the Century Association from 1885, and from 1888, his favorite social organization, the Players Club, a club of artists, actors, and literati.⁵ From the early 1880s Saint-Gaudens's own Thirty-sixth Street studio was an established gathering spot for Sunday afternoon "smoking concerts" (fig. 51) for New York's cultural elite. As Kenyon Cox noted: "I met clever people there. Everybody in the literary or artistic world that comes to New York seems to be brought there as a matter of course."⁶ And lastly, during this period Saint-Gaudens assembled a coterie of talented studio assistants, which had already included Louis St. Gaudens, Frederick William MacMonnies, and Philip Martiny. These sculptors were among a second generation of French-trained sculptors who by the late 1880s infiltrated New York exhibition venues, using them to establish their names just as their mentor had done a decade earlier. Saint-Gaudens influenced still others by teaching modeling classes at the Art Students League from 1888 until his departure for Paris in 1897, another avenue through which he was able to proselytize for the advancement of the arts in America.

The mid-1880s also represents the period of Saint-Gaudens's transition to a full-fledged monumental sculptor whose smaller work was now an occasional, rather than principal element in his oeuvre as it had been in the late 1870s and early 1880s. His tendency to overcommit was evident as he simultaneously labored on the *Puritan*,

Lincoln, and *Shaw* monuments and continued to take on new commissions, lured by their prestige and promise of large remunerations. These orders included one from the Fairmount Park Association of Philadelphia in 1885 for a monument to the assassinated president James Garfield (the final contract was not signed until 1893 and the overlifesize bronze bust dedicated in 1896). The following year the sculptor began a long and tempestuous relationship with the United States government when, in his final days, former president Chester Arthur selected Saint-Gaudens to complete a marble portrait bust (1887-92) for the Senate chamber of the United States Capitol.⁷ It was also in 1887 that Henry Adams commissioned Saint-Gaudens's most enigmatic and private monument, the *Adams Memorial* (1886-91; Rock Creek Cemetery, Washington, D.C.).

The Standing Lincoln

The Standing Lincoln, or more formally, *Abraham Lincoln: The Man*, was unveiled in Chicago's Lincoln Park on October 11, 1887. The monument was funded by the estate of Eli Bates, a Chicago business magnate whose will designated \$40,000 for the erection of a statue to Lincoln. After reviewing and rejecting four unsatisfactory designs,⁸ the trustees of the Lincoln Memorial Fund unofficially offered the commission to Saint-Gaudens in 1883. Saint-Gaudens met with the Bates committee in Chicago several times, including in late summer 1883 with White, who would design the granite pedestal and sweeping exedra bench and steps. The formal contract was not signed until November 11, 1884.⁹

Saint-Gaudens began by creating sketches of both a seated Lincoln and a standing one during his first summer in Cornish, New Hampshire. In the final conception, a wholly novel format, the sixteenth president is solemnly rising from the Chair of State poised to deliver an oration, his head lowered and his left foot slightly advanced. Saint-Gaudens's depiction of the Great Emancipator was based not only on his childhood memories of Lincoln in New York, but also on a live model from Cornish, where he had been promised "plenty of Lincoln-shaped men."¹⁰ His representation also benefited from the discovery of sculptor Leonard Wells Volk's 1860 life casts of Lincoln's face and hands in the winter of 1885-86. Thirty-three individuals joined in a subscription effort led by Gilder, Thomas B. Clarke, and Saint-Gaudens to purchase the casts from the artist's son Douglas. In return they received bronze casts (the originals were given by Gilder to the Smithsonian Institution), produced under Saint-Gaudens's direction, and the sculptor gained an important model for his likeness.¹¹

Although Saint-Gaudens's *Robert Richard Randall Monument* was dedicated on Staten Island in 1884, the *Lincoln* must rightly be seen as Saint-Gaudens's second major monument and his follow-up effort to the *Farragut*. Whereas Randall was a local hero, Farragut and Lincoln were national icons. Over the course of the six years since the dedication of the New York monument, Saint-Gaudens had worked simultaneously on several major commissions, but it was the *Lincoln* that held the potential to substantiate and again validate the sculptor's reputation as a maker of historical figures. That it was destined for another major American city, the "second city," was of no little importance in expanding Saint-Gaudens's range and reputation geographically and critically. According to the *New York World*, the award of the *Lincoln* contract to an outsider (albeit

one with a solid reputation), rather than a local sculptor such as Leonard Wells Volk, made “the art circles of Chicago ring with indignation. . . . The Chicago papers . . . are stoutly defending the remarkable proposition that Chicago is the cradle and home of sculpture.”¹² Discerning Chicagoans no doubt expected a world-class monument worthy of their city.

As with the *Farragut*, the *Lincoln* engaged the press’s curiosity in the months leading up to its unveiling, despite Saint-Gaudens’s desire for privacy. The site was even left open by the contractors during construction, which enabled public viewing and infuriated the sculptor.¹³ Still, Saint-Gaudens allowed for some carefully controlled publicity (or propaganda). In June, shortly before the model went to Henry-Bonnard foundry for casting, the *New York Times* described the sculpture at length and praised Saint-Gaudens’s ability to solve “the problem of being very real and yet indicating grandeur of character.”¹⁴ The writer for the *Critic*, who saw the clay model in the sculptor’s studio, conscientiously described the eleven-and-a-half-foot figure and its planned architectural setting. He or she (likely Jeanette L. Gilder) then assessed the sculpture as “very successful” and likewise praised Saint-Gaudens for “preserving the strongly marked individuality of the subject, with the utmost realism, and yet giving it the ideal quality which elevates it to the dignity of an heroic type. . . . The newly finished monument is, artistically, the first statue of Lincoln that has yet been made.”¹⁵ These articles hint at the challenges the sculptor faced in his quest to portray a national icon and satisfy a knowing populace—not only in creating an accurate, unhackneyed likeness, but also in conveying the quintessence of a martyred man.

The *Standing Lincoln* was dedicated on a rainy Saturday afternoon in front of a crowd of 10,000.¹⁶ Young Abraham Lincoln, son of Robert Todd Lincoln and grandson of the president, unveiled the flag-draped statue. Critics immediately seized upon the distinctiveness of Saint-Gaudens's representation of Lincoln. Several days before its unveiling, the *New York Times* noted on its front page that art critics pronounced this effigy of the martyred President "superior to any yet created."¹⁷ Having overcome any regional prejudices against the sculptor, the *Chicago Tribune* ran a lengthy front-page article prior to the dedication discussing Saint-Gaudens and the circumstances of the commission. It proudly declared the *Lincoln* to be "the finest product of American sculpture yet achieved . . . by the foremost of American sculptors."¹⁸ With this sculpture in Chicago, the writer noted that the *Farragut*, in New York, was "hitherto acknowledged . . . the highest example of American sculpture." But the writer did not further elaborate on regional issues when describing Saint-Gaudens, not as a New Yorker, but now as a national artist: "An American, deeply attached to his country and its principles, and an artist aglow with the fire of his pursuit." In summarizing Saint-Gaudens's monumental achievements later in the article, the author called the sculptor "at present a conspicuous personage in the art world."¹⁹ This preview article stressed the heroic simplicity of Saint-Gaudens's representation of Lincoln in a lengthy description of the pose, dress, and attitude of the figure. Without accessories or artifice, the sculptor captured "simple, lofty, strong, kind, but plain, honest, rugged Lincoln—this was the ideal of the work."²⁰

The most significant and widely published assessment of the *Lincoln* came from Mariana Van Rensselaer, whose two-page illustrated article was published in the *Century Magazine* in November (fig. 52).²¹ Van Rensselaer had been planning to focus on Saint-

Gaudens again for some time, for the prospectus for the *American Architect and Building News* for 1887 promised “from her pen . . . some notes on the ‘Works of Augustus St. Gaudens, sculptor.’”²² No monographic article on the artist ensued in the pages of *American Architect and Building News*, but in the June issue she offered extensive and lavish encomiums for Saint-Gaudens and his *Henry W. Bellows Memorial* (discussed below) in her survey of decorative art in ecclesiastical settings.²³ The *Lincoln* article for *Century* therefore was Van Rensselaer’s second major promotion of the sculptor that year. She opened by assessing the significance of the *Lincoln* in Saint-Gaudens’s career, calling it “the most important commemorative work that Mr. St. Gaudens has yet produced and may well remain the most important of his life.”²⁴ The majority of Van Rensselaer’s article was devoted to an analysis of Saint-Gaudens’s graceful “union of idealistic conception and realistic rendering”²⁵ in his portrayal of Lincoln the man and Lincoln the character. Noting that Saint-Gaudens was trained in a modern “gospel of individuality” that prized character over beauty, she outlined the challenges that the sculptor overcame in his representation of a complex forceful personality—a thinker, a leader, an executive, an orator, a philosopher, a prophet. In depicting the total man, “the man of action . . . the man of affairs,” Van Rensselaer judged Saint-Gaudens’s depiction of Lincoln rising from his chair as a transitional and encapsulating moment of action and imminence: “Two ideas are thus expressed in the composition, but they are not separately, independently expressed to the detriment of unity. . . . We see, therefore, that completeness of expression has been arrived at through a simple, idealistic conception.”²⁶

At the same time, Van Rensselaer found the sculptor’s representation realistic: “The pose is simple, natural, individually characteristic. . . . What we see are realities, but

we see them suffused with poetic thought and typical exploratory meanings, and ennobled though not altered through the subtle touch of art. . . .” To her, such a masterful portrait of the “inner Lincoln” could only be accomplished by a hand as skillful as Saint-Gaudens’s. Van Rensselaer also praised the originality of Lincoln’s pose in the history of art, noting that the individuality and innovation of the monument placed it in a limited class of works, specifically “classic art when at its best.” Having woven Saint-Gaudens into a great artistic heritage and duly acknowledging White’s collaboration on the distinct viewing environment, she ended as she had begun, on a high note of praise: “Together they have given us a monument which is the most precious the country yet possesses; which is not only our best likeness of Abraham Lincoln, but our finest work of monumental art.”²⁷

Century Magazine, 1887

The timing of the publication of two major articles by Van Rensselaer and Cox in the November issue of *Century Magazine* was deliberately planned to coincide with the *Lincoln* and *Puritan* unveilings. Shortly before the publication of the articles, the *Critic* reported on the *Lincoln* dedication and observed that the November issue of the *Century* would contain an illustrated paper on Saint-Gaudens and his work.²⁸ In mid-November that same journal, which often acted as an extension of the *Century Magazine* and was always attentive to Saint-Gaudens’s current activities, again promoted “Mr. Kenyon Cox’s graceful and appreciative analysis of St. Gaudens as a sculptor.”²⁹ Cox’s article had been in the works since 1884, when he went to the Cornelius Vanderbilt II house to

make sketches of Saint-Gaudens's mantelpiece for the *Century*.³⁰ That the article was in fairly complete draft form for some time is substantiated by a letter that Saint-Gaudens wrote Cox in June 1886. He reported: "The Century people will be glad to have you look over your article and add if you wish something about the Chapin [*The Puritan*]. I send you a solar of it."³¹ The letter also confirms Saint-Gaudens's participation in the crafting of the article, a role he frequently played with Gilder circle writers. Indeed, a month earlier he had invited Gilder "and anybody from your office that would be interested" to see the model of *The Puritan* in his Thirty-sixth Street studio.³² Therefore, in assessing this article, one must keep in mind that Saint-Gaudens no doubt suggested appropriate content and approved what eventually went into print.

Cox's article was the first extended monographic consideration of Saint-Gaudens in a national journal; he described its purpose as "to attempt some sort of analysis of this talent, and to explain the grounds of admiration for Mr. St. Gaudens's work."³³ The text was attractively interspersed with illustrations, including drawings by Cox after Saint-Gaudens's work. Among them was Cox's charcoal-on-paper drawing of *The Children of Prescott Hall Butler* (fig. 53), which completed in 1885 and then engraved for publication by John Henry Ellsworth Whitney.³⁴ Not surprising, the primary thrust of Cox's article was to place the young sculptor in a distinguished artistic lineage and to salute his appreciation for and creation of things beautiful. Cox recognized the emergence of a new class of modern sculptors who resuscitated the dead art of sculpture to "one of the living arts . . . full of fresh vigor and moving on to the conquest of new realms of beauty for us." Among this class of artists, Cox counted Saint-Gaudens, who as an

American, represented a “*first* for us,—delighting us, and forming the taste of our children.”³⁵

Cox next entered on a lofty discussion of the challenges of sculpture-making and the traits a sculpture must ideally project, principally truth to actual form and development of character. Of the schools of sculpture that most expertly succeeded were those of ancient Greece and the Italian Renaissance. The modern sculptors, the third great school, were inspired successors, not imitators of their Renaissance brethren, a theme that was frequently reiterated in context of the American Renaissance artists: “The sculptors of to-day are working in the spirit of the Renaissance, but the very essence of that spirit is personality—individualism—independent study.” One of the salient qualities of Saint-Gaudens’s work was his “feeling for individuality,—the modern idea that man is not one of a species but is a character,—the caring less for the perfection of a race and more for the man himself as he is, with his faults as well as his merits.” In this context, Cox assessed the *Farragut* “as living—as *vital*,” an authentic figure one should be prepared to meet on the streets. The *Randall* was by necessity a more imaginative work, but still one that projected such distinct individual characteristics as “kindly, keen, alert, old . . . , sharp-eyed, hooked-nosed, firm-mouthed. . . .”³⁶

With Van Rensselaer’s notice on the *Standing Lincoln* following his article in the *Century Magazine*, it was likely planned that Cox avoid discussion of that monument.³⁷ Instead he devoted a paragraph to Saint-Gaudens’s newest monument, *The Puritan* (*Deacon Samuel Chapin*), for Springfield, Massachusetts. Interestingly, despite its significance in the sculptor’s oeuvre, its dedication on November 24, Thanksgiving Day, occasioned very little notice in the national or art-related press.³⁸ Major New York

newspapers printed short notices on the day after its unveiling, but did not follow up in greater depth.³⁹ The *Critic* made mention of the sculpture on several occasions, but only briefly.⁴⁰ In his article, Cox classified *The Puritan*, like the *Randall*, as ideal portraiture in the spirit of the Renaissance. He wrote of the sculpture enthusiastically as “the finest embodiment of Puritanism in our art” and included a full-page illustration of an early version in which the figure’s stance is more closed and his staff is positioned vertically.⁴¹

Cox, however, reserved his greatest praise for Saint-Gaudens’s bas-reliefs, a class of sculptures that he felt best embodied the sculptor’s Renaissance sensibilities, both technically and spiritually, through their “individuality of conception and delicate suavity of modeling.” To Cox, these works spoke to Saint-Gaudens’s talents to a degree even greater than the *Farragut*. The difficulty of low-relief sculpture, an art akin to painting, and Saint-Gaudens’s command thereof, resonated with Cox, a painter. Cox later defined this characteristic of low-relief sculpture with Saint-Gaudens’s work as the paradigm and the *Butler Children* and *Sarah Redwood Lee* as his specific examples:

Low-relief is thus an art nearly allied to painting, and which deals with aspects rather than with facts, and its exercise calls for the highest powers of perception and execution which the artist possesses. The lower the relief the greater—the more marvelous—the delicacy of the modelling 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.⁴²

Cox conceded that he dwelt on Saint-Gaudens’s alliance with Renaissance sculptors (whereas Van Rensselaer stressed the classical Greeks) because it was the best way to demonstrate the sculptor’s technical command. However to Cox, the artist was nothing if not original: “As I have said, the essence of Renaissance spirit is individuality, and in nothing is St. Gaudens more like the great artists of the fifteenth century than in

that he is eminently original and that the personal note is found in all his work.”⁴³ Among the most striking qualities of his sculptures were virility, purity, grace, and refinement. However, Cox reserved judgment on Saint-Gaudens’s rank in “our second Renaissance” until he produced a nude, the surest indicator of artistic prowess. Regardless, Cox’s closing flourish would indicate that in his mind, the sculptor’s position was secure and that he would play a central role in the vitalization of the arts in America: “Saint-Gaudens is an artist of intelligence, learning, and imagination, with a great and distinguished talent, who has done much and from whom we may hope for more.”⁴⁴

Architectural League of New York, 1887

Saint-Gaudens’s fitful association with the Society of American Artists during the mid-1880s was symptomatic of a larger dissatisfaction of sculptors with the limited choice of New York venues at which to present their new work. As evidenced in earlier chapters, the National Academy of Design and even the Society of American Artists infrequently offered propitious circumstances for the display of sculpture. In calling for new alternatives, Ripley Hitchcock observed an 1885 article for the *Art Amateur*:

When have we had any worthy presentation of sculpture? The few busts, statuettes and reliefs crowded into obscure corners of the Academy from year to year are usually beneath notice because our best men are unrepresented. They are well aware that the Academy offers no chance for the fitting exhibition of sculpture. Even the delightful work shown at the Society of American Artists during the last four or five years has, of necessity, appeared at a disadvantage. I have in mind an exhibition to consist only of sculpture, in which Messrs. St. Gaudens and Warner, and such others as have proved their merits, shall be fully represented, with the proviso that every example shall be placed as to be properly and favorably seen. . . . I do not believe that our sculptors, if they were insured respectful treatment, would decline to send available busts and bas-reliefs, or at least casts, and sketches of their more important works.⁴⁵

Although such advantageous conditions did not evolve until the exhibitions of the National Sculpture Society after its founding in 1893, new options were emerging for the display of sculpture by the mid-1880s, even if they were not solely dedicated to the plastic arts.

The Prize Fund exhibitions of the American Art Association were one of the more potentially hospitable—if short-lived—venues for sculptors and sculpture.⁴⁶ The American Art Association, founded in 1883 as a commercial gallery to promote the exhibition and sale of American art, began the Prize Fund shows in 1885 (incidentally the same year that the Society of American Artists held no exhibition). Funds were raised through public subscription of no more than \$200 per individual and prize-winning works were awarded by the jury to museums in cities in which subscribers were represented. The predominant flavor of those paintings exhibited and awarded were cosmopolitan landscapes and figure pieces, similar to those displayed at the Society annuals. For sculptors, like painters, the potential cash prizes were an incentive to participation, although sculptors were never conferred the larger awards during the five-year history of the Prize Fund. However, two sculptors earned gold medals, the subsidiary class of prizes valued at \$100: in 1886, Henry Hudson Kitson for his bronze statuette *Music of the Sea* (1884; Museum of Fine Arts, Boston) and in 1888 Cyrus Dallin for best sculpture, his plaster *Indian Hunter* (1888; unlocated).⁴⁷ By 1889, the last year of the Prize Fund (terminated due to the declining interest of both subscribers and artists), some fifteen sculptors had participated in the shows, among them John Donohue, Jonathan Scott Hartley, Edward Kemeys, and Olin Levi Warner.

Saint-Gaudens's alternative venue of choice was less-commercially oriented—the Architectural League of New York. It was founded at the Salmagundi Club in January 1881 by young architects such as Cass Gilbert, an apprentice to White. When the Architectural League was established, its purpose was as much collegial as professional; it provided an alternative to the more established American Institute of Architects. Naturally a parallel may be drawn to the upstart Society of American Artists and the entrenched National Academy of Design. In April 1881 the *American Architect and Building News* described the Architectural League as:

a society formed by the younger members of the architectural profession for the purposes . . . of stimulating study and design, of supplying the want of social intercourse, and of providing a general club-room at the disposal of the members, a collection of drawings, sketches, photographs, casts, and other material which would aid in architectural study, and the founding of an architectural library.⁴⁸

After a brief period of inactivity, the League's aims—under the stewardship of architect and critic Russell Sturgis—expanded to include an annual exhibition, the first of which was held in 1886. In the Architectural League sculptors found a sympathetic, more-object oriented venue, especially for the display of architectural and monumental projects and the preliminary works associated with them. The introductory note of the exhibition catalogue of 1889-90 underscores this geniality:

The Architectural League owes its existence to the truth, which becomes clearer every day to all art workmen, that none of the fine arts can flourish greatly without the success of the other arts as well. . . . It is also the conviction of the artists of the present day that not enough sympathy has existed between them when of different special pursuits, —the feeling that the sculptor should know a great deal about his architectural brothers and their ways, their works, their thoughts and aspirations, and that the painter should be in harmony with both is growing strong.

The Architectural League, therefore, has for its chief object the bringing together of men of these different and kindred pursuits in close and friendly relations.⁴⁹

The professed goals of these annuals were to assimilate the work of architect, decorator, and sculptor in order to raise artistic standards and to encourage the elevation of public taste and unity amongst the arts. Saint-Gaudens's decision to involve himself with this organization is not surprising given his longstanding affiliations with architects from Richardson to White to McKim. Saint-Gaudens's limited involvement at this venue—in 1887-88 and 1891-92—must be viewed in this context.⁵⁰ His personal conviction of fostering communal collaboration, rather than commercialism, was the ostensible motivating factor in his participation. He became an honorary member of the League in 1890 and served on its board of trustees in 1891-92.

The third annual exhibition was held at the Fifth Avenue Art Galleries from December 19, 1887, to January 7, 1888, its first outside of the club's modest rooms at 14 West 23 Street.⁵¹ The enormous show of 483 objects consisted of a juried section of 314 architectural plans, elevations, sketches, and sections, with the remainder comprising a loan collection of decorative objects relating to architecture. Saint-Gaudens may have served on the jury for this exhibition, along with McKim, Richard Morris Hunt, Edward H. Kendall, and Clarence S. Luce.⁵² Saint-Gaudens lent two large plasters to the loan section, an alto-relief memorial of Henry W. Bellows (fig. 54) and the *Children of Jacob H. Schiff*, which he had shown previously at the Society of American Artists in 1886. This display was installed in a separate gallery: the plaster *Bellows* was installed at the head of the loan gallery while the *Schiff Children* was placed on the center of the east wall. Also featured were a broad range of paintings, panels, furniture, tapestries, and functional objects as well as architectural designs by such leading representatives of the American aesthetic movement as John La Farge, Louis Comfort Tiffany, the Associated

Artists, and Cottier and Company. Such painters as Edwin H. Blashfield, Will H. Low, and Walter Shirlaw were represented by numerous submissions of a decidedly decorative bent. Other participating sculptors were George T. Brewster who submitted two panels of angels (unlocated) and New York portraitist Hartley who showed a bas-relief portrait of Abraham Lincoln (unlocated).

The architectural settings and large scale of Saint-Gaudens's reliefs allied them with other submissions, as did the fact that the original bronze *Henry W. Bellows Memorial* was intended for a public, ecclesiastical site. The *Bellows* was modeled during the summer of 1885, Saint-Gaudens's first in Cornish, New Hampshire. Executed contemporaneously with the *Schiff Children*, Saint-Gaudens was assisted on this commission by Martiny and advised by White. The finished bronze relief, more than ten feet high and four feet wide, commemorates Bellows, minister for forty-three years of All Souls Church, a Unitarian congregation in New York.⁵³ Bellows also served as president of the United States Sanitary Commission between 1861 and 1878 and was a founder of the Century Association, the Union League, and Harvard Club among other involvements. He was most assuredly a recognized member of the city's elite social and civic networks. In June 1886 the wall panel was installed in Jacob Wrey Mould's All Souls Church at Fourth Avenue and Twentieth Street to the right of the pulpit (the church is now at Lexington Avenue and Eightieth Street, and there the relief is similarly situated). Critical reaction was positive; the *Art Critic* deemed "the work . . . highly creditable to Mr. St. Gaudens."⁵⁴ For Saint-Gaudens, this project represented an uncharacteristically quick succession from modeling to casting to installation.

Both the *Schiff* and *Bellows* portraits, Saint-Gaudens's earliest full-length reliefs, share the common device of placing more fully modeled figures within an architectural setting. The life-size Bellows, attired in billowing clergy robes, is posed frontally with his head turned three-quarter to his right. His left hand is at his side while his right is raised and holds a small book. As in the *Schiff* portrait, where young Mortimer's foot projects beyond the plinth on which he stands, Saint-Gaudens used the same formal device of advancing Reverend Bellows's right foot off a platform out into the viewer's space. While the sculptor succeeded at the effect of spatial projection, little sense of depth is imparted due to the tablet's many decorative and architectural devices and inscriptions. Bellows is flanked by two pilasters and stands under an arch. His head, level with the top of the pilasters and a Greek cross, is surrounded by a rounded decorative inscription while below his feet is additional lettering. The figure and architectural setting are in turn enveloped by a decorative border shaped at the top like a pediment. This bronze relief is affixed to a polished yellow brown marble panel that presents inscriptions above and below supplied by Charles W. Eliot, president of Harvard College.⁵⁵

Assessing the critical reaction to Saint-Gaudens's sculpture in the context of the broad panoply of objects at the Architectural League exhibition is a difficult exercise. Whereas it is possible to evaluate emerging stylistic trends from the sculptures shown at the Society annuals, the focus of the Architectural League's criticism naturally was on architects rather than the "decorative" objects. In speaking of the *Schiff Children* as "handsome," the *Art Amateur* referenced the uneven quality of the loan exhibition:

Unfortunately all the work exhibited is by no means up to this high level; Dr. Bellows is surrounded by Will H. Low's drawings for his illustrations to the odes and sonnets of Keats, which, it must be said, are, with three or four exceptions, dead commonplace, and have no touch of contact with the author of 'Endymion.'

Mr. St. Gaudens's tablet on the east wall is surmounted by Mr. Beckwith's pastel, 'Scherzo,' which is simple and handsome, and flanked by two large embroidery panels lent by the Associated Artists, charming on color but leaving much to be desired in drawing.⁵⁶

Still, Saint-Gaudens's submissions, which were prominently placed, attracted notice for their high quality. The *Daily Tribune* noted that the *Schiff Children* revealed the artist's "zeal for color," but refrained from extended commentary since these examples of Saint-Gaudens's work "we have discussed at other times."⁵⁷ On the whole, newspapers devoted far less coverage to the Architectural League annuals than to those of the National Academy and the Society of American Artists.

National Academy of Design, New York, 1888

In 1888, after a thirteen-year absence, Saint-Gaudens again exhibited his sculpture at the National Academy of Design, displaying two portraits—a marble bas-relief of Bessie Smith White (fig. 55) and a plaster bust of William Tecumseh Sherman (fig. 56). What prompted the sculptor's return to the Academy is cause for an educated guess. Saint-Gaudens considered submitting work to the Academy as early as 1881 when he made arrangements with Charles G. Loring in early March for the shipment of the *Jules Bastien-Lepage* relief to be sent "at your earliest convenience for in case I exhibit it at the Academy instead of the Society of A.A."⁵⁸ Whether the sculptor's rationale for possible display at the Academy in 1881 was anything more than commercial or promotional is debatable, for in subsequent correspondence with Loring, Saint-Gaudens spoke of his participation on the Society's selection committee as an "absolute necessity of protesting continuously and energetically against the gross injustice of the Academy."⁵⁹

By 1888, however, ideological differences between the Academy and the Society of American Artists were less sharply divided. The Academy remained a conservative institution with the likes of Daniel Huntington, Thomas Moran, and John George Brown on its council, yet it also was still the most prominent venue for the display and sale of art in the country. Despite his ongoing belief in the efficacy of the Society's mission, the consistent lack of adequate conditions for the display of sculpture at the Society must have been a factor in Saint-Gaudens's decision to return to the Academy. Further, his Beaux-Arts modeling style, novel in the 1870s, was by now *de rigueur* for French-trained American sculptors exhibiting at the Society and the Academy. As the most prominent monumental sculptor in the country, Saint-Gaudens was now less concerned with fanning the flames of youthful idealism than putting forth solid new work. Additionally, if Saint-Gaudens was ever to achieve one of American art's historic distinctions, the status of academician of the National Academy of Design, his participation would have been mandatory. The sculptor's lack of recognition by the Academy to date attracted commentary in the *New York Times*:

It is rather amusing to find by the catalogue that St. Gaudens has not even A.N.A. tacked to his name; but so it appears. . . . One examines the catalogue in vain for N.A. or A.N.A. after Mr. Warner's name. There is really something comic in a situation which permits the two foremost sculptors of New-York if not of the country to exhibit in and give value to an exhibition of the National Academy of Design and yet to keep from them the honor of membership barren though that honor be.⁶⁰

Only during the 1888 annual was Saint-Gaudens elected to associate academician, one of eight Society members who received this honor that year, another sign of the tempering of rivalry.⁶¹ Following his participation in the 1889 annual, he finally was named a full

academician, a title that only six American sculptors had earned to date.⁶² Warner was elected at the same time.⁶³

Saint-Gaudens's participation in the 1888 exhibition must be seen in context of a larger dissolution of boundaries between the "older" and "younger" artists at the 1888 annual, a topic of considerable discussion in the press. The *Mail and Express* offered an explanation for this occurrence: "Many of the younger men who, of late years, had become somewhat disaffected toward the academy have concluded that, after all, it affords excellent opportunities for bringing an artist's paintings to the notice of the public. . . ." ⁶⁴ The majority of the Society's longstanding members participated in the 1888 Academy show, ⁶⁵ including both Saint-Gaudens and Warner, neither of whom contributed works to that year's Society annual. A recurrent watchword was the "reconciliation" of these two very different artistic generations. The *World* reported: "The stronger men, both old and young, are all well represented, the leading artists in other organizations, such as Chase, St. Gaudens, Twatchmann [sic] and Weir have all wheeled well into and on the line, and there is an unmistakable evidence of a new and progressive policy and atmosphere visible." ⁶⁶ Both William Merritt Chase and John Singer Sargent exhibited for the first time since 1879. The *Evening Post* made specific mention of Saint-Gaudens's return to the Academy: "Mr. St. Gaudens's appearance as an exhibitor at the Academy is the most promising sign of the long-looked-for improvement in this the oldest and best known of American exhibitions." ⁶⁷ Clarence Cook offered an analogy for this moment of reunion with his usual clever way with words:

The war between the once angry combatants—a war inevitable and never to be regretted—seems now effectively closed. The old chestnut about the lion and the lamb may once more be brought upon the table with a difference: the animals

have indeed lain down together, but this time the lamb is not inside the lion. . . . So with the once recalcitrant Society of American Artists; their boyish huff over, they have concluded a peace on their own terms, and compromised with their friendly old enemy, but insisting on having everything pretty much their own way.⁶⁸

A tempering in rivalry was perhaps evitable with the younger painters moderating their more experimental styles while the 'old guard' Academy painters adapted to the times. It was symbolically represented by equity in hanging standards, with deference often given to the younger artists:

If the president of the Academy [Daniel Huntington] has the place of honor opposite the main entrance to the south gallery, the president of the Society of American Artists, Mr. Chase, has a place of honor at the east end. Messrs. Sonntag and Thomas Moran hold the corner panels naturally enough, and then we find Mr. Thomas Eakins in the centre of the west end. . . . In the east gallery the best place has been given to Mr. Sargent's portrait, and here, as in the north gallery, an entire panel is nearly filled with the work of the younger painters.⁶⁹

Many critics analyzing the 1888 annual, which was held between April 2 and May 12, called it among the most outstanding in the Academy's history and fully representative of the range and accomplishment of American art.⁷⁰ The installation was vitalized by presence of the "younger men," not only in the quality of works shown, but in the technical influences that their foreign training purveyed to older stay-at-home artists. As the *Critic* noted: "The modern progressive spirit informs even the works of the painters hitherto considered hopelessly conservative."⁷¹

Of the 598 works in the Academy annual, sculpture was moderately represented with eighteen examples. No sculptors were named to the selection or hanging committees and their works did not warrant a separate section in the catalogue. Despite the paucity in numbers, the quality of sculpture drew frequent remarks: "The sculpture is better than usual," observed the writer for the *Critic*, while the *New York Times* found that the

Academy, not the Society of American Artists, “strange to say, has the better in sculpture.”⁷² Other journalists commented on the range of talent. For instance, Van Rensselaer found in the sculpture “some of the most ludicrously bad things of all” to “some of the best things of all.”⁷³ Among the contributors were longtime exhibitor John Rogers with a design for his proposed monument of John Eliot preaching to the Indians (ca. 1888) and newcomer Daniel Chester French with a bust of Boston surgeon Samuel Cabot (1885-86; plaster, private collection) and a female “Study of a Head.”⁷⁴

Three objects repeatedly drew mention for a superior quality that compensated for a lack of quantity: Saint-Gaudens’s *White* and *Sherman* and Warner’s bust of Weir, a bronze cast lent by the sitter (now at the American Academy of Arts and Letters, New York). The *New York Sun* speaks for the lot: “Even the display of sculpture is inspiring to contemplate, for although it includes some of the chief atrocities of the exhibition, it also includes two works which in many eyes must seem the very best of the whole. These are Mr. St. Gaudens’s two contributions, each of surpassing interest in itself. . . .”⁷⁵ While Saint-Gaudens and Weir had shared the critical limelight in exhibitions past, Saint-Gaudens’s two sculptures—especially the *Sherman*—here drew far greater attention, in part because Warner’s portrait was already known to the press and also because of the repute of Saint-Gaudens’s Civil War subject. Not only that, in the many reviews of this annual, the praise for Saint-Gaudens’s work was unilateral; in this instance there was just one negative reference.

The marble portrait of Bessie White was a continuation of the relief theme that Saint-Gaudens had been pursuing since the late 1870s—a personalized work executed as a token of friendship, displayed in a public forum. A representation of Stanford White’s

bride in her wedding finery, the portrait was a gift from the sculptor to the couple on the occasion of their marriage on February 7, 1884, in New York.⁷⁶ Modeling the portrait was Saint-Gaudens's actual wedding gift to the Whites, but he also paid for its translation into marble to settle a long-standing debt with the architect. It is not known when and where this piece was carved; Saint-Gaudens himself was said to have disliked the touch of marble⁷⁷ and avoided the carving process. Nor is it known why the sculptor decided to translate the piece to marble rather than cast it in his more accustomed medium of bronze. It may have been White's preference or perhaps Saint-Gaudens felt that the marble better reflected the portrait's spirit and the purity it was meant to evoke. Certainly the marble is more restrained than his bronzes, with the surface lacking the textural variation and easy verve of his more accustomed medium.

Mrs. White is depicted at half-length in three-quarter profile, enveloped in her long flowing veil. Her right arm is raised, delicately brushing the veil from her face, while in her left hand she holds a bunch of roses, their unfolding blooms symbols of a woman on the threshold of maturity. Saint-Gaudens's handling of this rectangular composition finds parallels in other "presentation" or commissioned reliefs—the *Children of Jacob H. Schiff*, the *Henry Bellows Memorial*, and most similarly, *Louise Miller Howland* (fig. 57), which he completed in 1888. In all, the sculptor's handling of form transitions skillfully from shallow to high relief, a distinct departure from the sketchy relief aesthetic. Whereas Mrs. White's veil is rendered with less detail, the face is fully modeled, the nose three-dimensional, and the chin deeply undercut. The face has elements of both the profile view at which Saint-Gaudens was so adept and the more difficult frontal approach that he mastered in the *Howland* relief. The extreme undulation

of the pictorial field, with faint horizontal striations, allows for considerable contrasts of light and shadow, from the translucent sheen of Mrs. White's cheek to the dark recesses under her left hand.

Installed in a corner of the West Gallery, *Bessie White*, catalogued as "Portrait Medallion," drew unequivocal critical praise at the 1888 Academy annual.⁷⁸ This appreciation was in large part due to the formal departures from Saint-Gaudens's previous reliefs—namely the higher modeling and the marble medium. Critics appreciated these stylistic departures, which while novel and more technically refined, retained recognizable elements of the popular sketch reliefs. For instance, the writer for the *Evening Post* observed that the sculptor "treated his subject with a simplicity that forms its greatest charm. It is conceived and carried out in harmony with the tenets of the modern French school, with a certain delicate grace of its own which always makes itself felt in Mr. St. Gaudens's work of this class."⁷⁹ Although innovative and original in their own right, these technical qualities enabled broad comparison to Italian sculpture of the past and French sculpture of the present. For critics eager to once again assert Saint-Gaudens as a successor to a distinguished lineage, *Mrs. White* served their needs. The *New York Sun's* reviewer commended not only the variation in handling of depth but also its implied artistic roots: "to be at once so delicate and so masculine, so painter-like and so truly sculptural, so refined and tender in sentiment yet so monumental in expression, this is to work as the great artists in the low-relief of the early Renaissance worked; and as who else has worked since they departed? This is high praise no doubt; but it is not too high and it cannot be too often repeated."⁸⁰ Interestingly, the very element which today makes this association obvious—the Renaissance Revival gilt-wood frame of Stanford

White's design—was not yet installed on the marble; one review documents the presence of “a wooden plaque of creamy white, which accords with the colder tones of the marble.”⁸¹

The *White* relief also elicited comparison to trends in contemporary American painting, both in terms of stylistic handling and in its compositional arrangement. In the half-length format of the relief, certain critics recognized an allegiance to “decorative” female portraits of the day in paintings by the likes of Blashfield, Millet, and Thomas Wilmer Dewing. For instance, the writer for the *Critic* noted, “Mr. St. Gaudens's marble portrait relief of a lady in a veil is a beautiful example of decorative portraiture as applied to sculpture.”⁸² These idealizing paintings, which combined realism and decoration, responded to the innovative aestheticism of James McNeill Whistler's portraits and Japanese art. They also revealed formal concerns for color and line, practical ones for setting and accessories, and less tangible, but significantly, an emphasis on generalized mood over specific action. Saint-Gaudens's own experimentation with more “decorative” sculptural compositions has been observed in his *Schiff Children* and would be carried forward with varying degrees of success in later reliefs, notably the full-length portrait of Violet Sargent (discussed below). Such a linkage is yet another example of the ongoing osmotic formal interchanges between American Renaissance painters and sculptors.

Critics reserved their highest praise for Saint-Gaudens's plaster bust of General William Tecumseh Sherman. The sculpture represented a departure in Saint-Gaudens's exhibited works, not only as the first life-size portrait bust displayed since the *Woolsey* in 1880, but moreover as a representation of a figure of national significance. The celebrated Civil War hero is best known for his triumphant “march to the sea,” moving

his troops 300 miles through Georgia to Savannah over twenty-four days in 1864. Saint-Gaudens had long admired the general, who had moved to New York in 1886. The sculptor recalled that this portrait was “a labor of love, for the General had remained in my eye as the typical American soldier ever since I had formed that idea of him during the Civil War.”⁸³ Saint-Gaudens was able to persuade Sherman to sit for his portrait through the auspices of Sherman’s daughter Rachel, and Whitelaw Reid, editor of the *New York Daily Tribune*.⁸⁴ Sherman posed for Saint-Gaudens between January and March 1888, “in about eighteen periods of two hours each.”⁸⁵ The sculptor’s pleasure with the result is evident in a letter that the general wrote to his niece Lizzie Cameron: “[Saint-Gaudens] is convinced that my bust is the very best work he has ever done.”⁸⁶ It is also manifested in Saint-Gaudens presenting the piece for public inspection at the Academy less than a month after the completion of sittings. The bust was shown at one end of the South Gallery, the largest of the exhibition rooms, on a “fittingly conspicuous pedestal.”⁸⁷

Saint-Gaudens’s robust portrait of Sherman is a tour-de-force of naturalistic Beaux-Arts modeling. The facial features are rendered with truthful attention to detail—from the hawkish nose to the furrowed brows and stubbly face. Sherman, with head directed alertly to his left, is in military uniform, but his collar is open and tie askew, apparently in deference to the sitter’s insistence.⁸⁸ This detail, which charmed the critics, humanizes the forceful Sherman. The bust is mounted on a rectangular plinth inscribed with the general’s name; this plinth in turn surmounts a level of beribboned laurel leaves on another larger rectangular base.

Response to the *Sherman* drew repeatedly on several watchwords: “virile,” “vigorous,” “crisp,” and “firm.” These flattering qualities reflected perceptions of Sherman’s steely character as well as Saint-Gaudens’s more masculine approach to modeling, a departure from his sketchy and decorative reliefs. Such gendered critical rhetoric is atypical in connection with the artist’s exhibited works. The unusually successful confluence of a well-known subject and a complimentary modeling approach led to praise for the extreme masculine realism of the portrait and its striking resemblance to the original. “A masterpiece of modelling and character-painting, all alive, struck out at a heat,” proclaimed Cook in his *Studio*.⁸⁹ The *New York Times* underscored the “speaking” nature of the bust:

The extremely good bust of Gen. Tecumseh Sherman [is] so good that no one who has seen him near by can fail to smile at the sight. His head is slightly turned; his brows are awake; his lips are almost parted for a torrent of words; his necktie is awry, every one of the 10,000 wrinkles is alive and talkative, seeming to say: ‘Here I am; you can’t catch Tecumseh Sherman sleeping—try your boat!’⁹⁰

In particular, Saint-Gaudens’s life-like handling of Sherman’s face—exquisitely detailed in its rendering of facial hair and wrinkles—drew praise. The artist also was commended for allowing these details not to take precedence over the more important larger effect of massing and proportion.⁹¹ Only the writer for the *Art Amateur* offered negative feedback, finding the portrait “somewhat distressing in its multitude of details when seen too near,” but allowed that it was “full of force and character when viewed across the room.”⁹²

From truthfulness and reality, critics inevitably seized upon *Sherman* as the successful embodiment of the “American” type. However slippery the definition of “American” may be, in this case critics seemed to define it as reflecting a spirited individuality that departed from a faithfully classic ideal (so expertly insinuated in

Warner's bust of Weir). The *Evening Post's* assessment of the *Sherman* is a case in point: "Here, as in the Lincoln, the sculptor has had to deal with a head which in no way suggests the classic ideal, and, which has yet such a strong personality, such an individual style of its own that it produces very much the same impression of grandeur in looking at it as one receives from some of the antiques."⁹³ To the *Critic*, the *Sherman* reflected the "American type" through its successful evocation of the sitter's crusty personality: "It is not only that the head is thoroughly alive and a good likeness . . . but this is the man himself—spare, wrinkled, nervous, with his cravat askew, and a humorous shrewdness irradiating from his countenance."⁹⁴ This writer prophesied correctly that Saint-Gaudens's *Sherman* "is destined, in all likelihood, to go down to posterity as the accepted portrait, in plastic form, of this famous hero of the Civil War."⁹⁵

Critics also remarked upon differences between the *Sherman* and *White*. The branding of the *Sherman* as "American" presents an interesting foil to the critical insertion of *Bessie White* within a lineage of work by the Italian Renaissance masters. In each case, Saint-Gaudens by inference is commended for capturing the spirit of a type and making it reflective of his own personal style. Further, if critics saluted Saint-Gaudens's versatility of modeling techniques in the portrait of Mrs. White, they reserved even greater appreciation for the stylistic and expressive variations evident between the "feminine" refined *White* and the "masculine" vigorous *Sherman*. The broad technical range of the artist—encapsulated in these two works—drew appreciative notice from several critics, including Van Rensselaer for the *Independent*, who in labeling the *Sherman* a "masterly piece of work," marveled "at the versatility of the man who could

turn from it and do work so opposite in character, yet so concordant in quality as the tenderly conceived and delicately handled low-relief.”⁹⁶

Inevitably Saint-Gaudens’s appealing low relief work attracted imitators throughout his career. As Sarah Burns has observed in relation to Sargent and Whistler, aesthetic individuality became “a commodity well worth stealing” but in doing so, the followers exposed their own lack of creativity.⁹⁷ From the early 1880s, other sculptors—especially his assistants—attempted to approximate Saint-Gaudens’s modeling technique and compositional mannerisms with varying degrees of success. Jonathan Scott Hartley, an associate academician, exhibited such a derivative piece, entitled *A Family Group* (unlocated), at the Academy in 1888. The plaster bas-relief, which depicted the four children of George Inness, Jr., on a hobbyhorse, attracted critical irritation.⁹⁸ In transitioning from a discussion of the *Sherman* to other exhibited sculptures, the *Sun*’s writer found “to pass directly from Mr. St. Gaudens’s works to the poorest of their class is to receive a shock which almost makes one feel as though all mankind could not be akin, even in the number of their senses. . . . If there is a depth of ridiculousness . . . , it must have been all but fathomed when the family group . . . which greets us on the staircase . . . was elaborated.”⁹⁹ The low-relief composition suffered from charges of too closely imitating Saint-Gaudens’s own innovative work in a style that had in a sense become earmarked as uniquely his. Two examples suffice, one emphasizing skillful imitation and the other rote copying. On the one hand, the *Critic* found Hartley’s relief “a good imitation of the Saint-Gaudens manner.” On the other, the *New York Times* assessed it as “not well considered and further harmed by a too manifest copying of the style of

Augustus Saint-Gaudens.”¹⁰⁰ The 1890s, and particularly the first years of the twentieth century, would bring more followers of Saint-Gaudens’s manner of relief sculpture.

National Academy of Design, New York, 1889

The sixty-fourth annual exhibition of the National Academy of Design marked Saint-Gaudens’s third and final participation at this venue, with his plaster bas-relief of Scottish author Robert Louis Stevenson (fig. 58). Unlike the more uniformly praised 1888 show, the 1889 exhibition, held from April 1 to May 11, was plagued with complaints about the wide-ranging quality of the 547 submissions. Most agreed that the 1889 show fell far short of its predecessor. Accordingly, the critics found little to compliment and much to gripe about; the writing is marked by an unusually disparate range of opinions on the merits of certain works. Even well-regarded artists—the likes of Chase and Sargent—were deemed as failing to live up to their usual standards.¹⁰¹ No one painting emerged as a critical favorite, although attracting consistent positive notice were George Inness’s *Coming Storm* (1888), the show’s largest landscape, and Thomas Hovenden’s *In the Hands of the Enemy* (1889; Ellen Batell Stoeckel Trust, Yale University, New Haven, Conn.) which depicts a Confederate soldier wounded at Gettysburg receiving medical care in a Union household.

The hanging committee of six—Hamilton Hamilton, Charles Miller, Louis Moeller, Thomas Moran, J. Francis Murphy, and J. C. Nicoll—precipitated the collective irritation of critics and artists alike by installing the show in a taxonomic fashion, with certain galleries devoted to specific genres of painting. This experiment, modeled on

hanging practices at the American Watercolor Society, was uniformly panned, particularly because this typing of subjects made the overall quality of the show difficult to assess. Large landscapes occupied the South Gallery, cabinet-size paintings were in the North Gallery, and still lifes and miscellaneous fare in the corridor. Paintings higher in tone were installed in the West room, a space characterized by one writer as given over to the “children of air and light” or, in other words, the emerging plein-air school of French-trained artists.¹⁰² Attracting most critical attention, ire, as well as no small measure of sarcasm, was the manner in which sixty-six portraits were displayed in the East Gallery, in rows of figures with many “skyed.” The *Herald* noted that after the art critics were admitted on the second varnishing day, there were remarks about “a chamber of horrors,” jokes “confined not entirely to the writers.”¹⁰³ The *Daily Tribune* acknowledged the stylistic range of the portraits: “Fact and fancy, convention and revolution, colorless assertions and color-schemes are mingled in curious confusion.”¹⁰⁴

This diversity alludes to another critical theme of the 1889 show, the ongoing transition from the “old” to the “new” generation of artists, from a preponderance of landscapes to figure paintings. The *Critic* gave a nod to the achievements of the younger painters:

The unterrified way in which our younger and more competent painters return, year after year, to their charge upon the National Academy is the most encouraging sign to be perceived in the present state of American art. This spring, an attempt of the hanging committee to arrange the exhibits by their subjects has resulted in numerous chance encounters between the garrison and the invaders, to the manifest advantage of the latter.¹⁰⁵

Edward E. Simmons and Theodore Earl Butler each sent figure subjects from abroad.

Theodore Robinson, recently returned from France, exhibited *A King's Daughter* (1889;

Denver Art Museum), classical in subject but cautiously impressionistic in handling, reflecting the influence of his exposure to the work of Claude Monet.

For this annual, John Quincy Adams Ward represented sculptural interests on the Committee of Selection. Ward was a longtime presence at the Academy as a Council member, but he was also a conscientious advocate for younger French-trained sculptors attempting to establish a foothold in New York. While his presence may have allowed a comparatively respectable number of sculptures in the display—twenty-one—it did not insure advantageous standards of installation or uniform quality. As to be expected, most of the submissions were portrait busts, but there were several reliefs and ideal subjects.

The sculpture was displayed in two distinct areas. The South Gallery, with large landscapes, contained six portraits. These included pendant busts of Shakespearian subjects by Hartley: Lawrence Barrett as “Cassius” (1884) and Edwin Booth as “Brutus” (1889), commissioned by the Players Club in New York.¹⁰⁶ Warner was represented by two portraits in bronze: *Rosalie Olin Warner* (1888; marble, Smithsonian American Art Museum, Washington, D.C.), his infant daughter, and *Charles Erskine Scott Wood* (1888; bronze, Oregon Historical Society, Portland). German-trained Charles Niehaus, a newcomer to the Academy annuals, sent a bronze bust of George Hoadly (unlocated), former governor of Ohio. The remainder of the sculpture was installed at one end of the West Gallery, with its colorful figure pieces and landscapes, in a row on the same level as the picture line.¹⁰⁷ Among these were Saint-Gaudens’s *Stevenson* and first-timer Edward Clark Potter’s imaginative plaster *Sleeping Faun* (fig. 59), a sleeping round-bellied nude child with a rabbit poised to nibble on his garland. Also included in this line-up were French’s plaster bust of young John Murray Forbes (1888; Chesterwood Museum,

Stockbridge, Mass.) and his French-trained protégé Frank Edwin Elwell's *Rebecca* and *Katharine* (both unlocated). Hartley also had two unidentified portraits in this gallery.

The manner in which the sculpture was installed provoked criticism. The *Times* offered an observation worth underscoring: the Academy was not equipped to show anything larger than busts and small reliefs.¹⁰⁸ As such, these exhibited works were not necessarily representative of a sculptor's larger output, a problem partially redressed by the exhibitions of the National Sculpture Society beginning in the 1890s. After lamenting the placement of Potter's recumbent *Faun* on a radiator against a wall, the writer for the *Sun* provided a colorful description of the installation conditions:

And in general one is prompted to ask, When will the Academy realize that it is discreditable to them as well as discourteous to our sculptors to place their works so badly? The end of the west room looks like a plaster moulder's shop with its close-set row of busts on shelves. . . . Painters are allowed to isolate their pictures in frames, and no doubt sculptors would be willing to furnish modest pedestals for works if the Academy cannot afford to supply them.¹⁰⁹

As to be expected, opinion varied about the overall merit of the sculptures. Several reviewers commented on its collective strength. The *Daily Tribune* found that "the sculpture more than holds its own."¹¹⁰ The *Times*, which approved of the overall quality of sculpture, observed that the "work has at once raised the standards of statuary at the exhibitions from the low condition it used to hold."¹¹¹ Despite such words of praise, the tenor of the criticism was more negative than usual, especially in the assessments of individual works, including Saint-Gaudens's *Stevenson*. Only a few sculptors—notably Potter and French—garnered repeatedly even-keeled praise for their submissions.

Objections notwithstanding, the press still devoted most attention to Saint-Gaudens and his *Stevenson*, completed between 1887-88 while the author was in the United States.¹¹² In the midst of his ongoing monumental commissions, Saint-Gaudens

modeled this portrait for pleasure as he greatly admired Stevenson and had enjoyed reading his *New Arabian Nights* (1882). The initial modeling sessions took place in Stevenson's rooms at the Hotel Albert on East Eleventh Street. Later ones, in which Saint-Gaudens arrived at the reclining pose, were at Stevenson's rented house in Manasquan, New Jersey. The composition depicts Stevenson, in left-facing profile, reclining in bed, his back bolstered by pillows and his legs covered by a blanket, a position he customarily assumed for comfort's sake because he was ill with tuberculosis. His head, with its delicate features and drooping hair and mustache, is held erect. His knees are drawn up to support a sheaf of papers, which he grasps with his left hand, while in his raised right hand he holds a cigarette. Early versions of the relief feature a lengthy inscription, a poem dedicated by Stevenson to Will H. Low, a mutual friend of the sculptor and author who arranged for the sittings.¹¹³ Saint-Gaudens originally modeled a rectangular composition, but soon refined the shape to circular. The plaster exhibited at the Academy in 1889 and the majority of bronze casts of this, Saint-Gaudens's most frequently produced relief, are in medallion format. In doing so, Saint-Gaudens eliminated the lower part of Stevenson's legs and much of the bed and bedding, creating a more compact composition well-suited to a tondo presentation.

Stevenson was a highly popular figure whose presence in the United States was closely followed by the press. Thus Saint-Gaudens's relief could not have failed to draw a certain amount of interest due to the renown of the sitter, just as had his bust of General Sherman in the 1888 Academy annual. The *Stevenson* was the sculpture most consistently mentioned and described in the exhibition's reviews. Commentary typically focused on a brief description of Stevenson and his unusual position in bed with shallow

analyses as to the quality of the piece. Yet, several writers, including the one for the *New York Herald*, deemed the *Stevenson* the most worthy of all the sculptural submissions (he called it “chief” and “masterly”).¹¹⁴ Others dissented, finding disappointing elements in the relief. The writer for the *Evening Post* felt that the *Stevenson*—its round format a compositional departure for the sculptor—did not live up to the standards of Saint-Gaudens’s earlier reliefs, including that which he had exhibited at the Academy the previous year. The *Stevenson*, “interesting as it is,” was not “equal to the best that he has done in this line.”¹¹⁵ The *Sun* concurred, referring specifically to the more impressive *Sherman*, but praised the more graceful side of the sculptor’s talent that is evident in the *Stevenson*.¹¹⁶

In the main, the *Stevenson* generated qualified praise. The *Critic* observed “plenty of imaginative insight . . . in Mr. St. Gaudens’s portrait medallion of Robert Louis Stevenson, careful though it is even to hardness.”¹¹⁷ This “hardness” may allude to the deliberately more structured arrangement of the medallion compared to such simply composed sketchy reliefs as *Rodman de Kay Gilder* or *Homer Saint-Gaudens*. The author of the *Daily Tribune*’s review, who wrote one of the lengthier analyses of the relief, clearly did not feel that the artist had lived up to his potential. After the requisite description of the composition, he wavered from positive to negative as he analyzed its various elements:

The attitude allows easy and graceful general lines, recalling those of some Tanagra figures, but the draperies are gathered below the waist a little awkwardly. The sculptor’s love of color and variety is less apparent here than at other times, but there are many familiar touches, like the relief given by the arrangement at the left wrist. The face is probably an acceptable portrait, but there were surely opportunities for finer, more ‘intimate’ modelling than we find. Moreover, however yielding the cushions may have been, it was unnecessary to sacrifice sculptural form, to leave only the

weakest outline of a body.

In concluding the writer still pronounced Saint-Gaudens's work preeminent among the sculpture in the west gallery.¹¹⁸ Such hypocrisy illustrates a developing pattern during the late 1880s whereby critics deemed Saint-Gaudens's sculpture, by default, the most meritorious, while identifying imperfections in the work.

Several critiqued the *Stevenson's* lengthy inscription, notably its relative prominence in the overall composition, occupying a large portion of the left side of the relief. The *Times*, although calling the medallion "graceful," sounded lukewarm when referring to "one of [Stevenson's] pretty songs which the sculptor has obligingly placed upon the background."¹¹⁹ The widely-circulated *Art Amateur* offered one of the most negative assessments of Saint-Gaudens's exhibited sculptures, attacking the artist with atypical harshness.

Mr. St. Gaudens has, apparently, not been able to find any [inspiration] anywhere for his medallion portrait of Robert Louis Stevenson. He has represented the writer as invalided, which does not seem to have been necessary, propped up with many cushions and writing a sonnet with very long, thin hands. The verses are carefully spelled out on the field in front of him; the principal character in the figure is the hands, which are evidently those of a sick man.¹²⁰

Interestingly, this writer objected to Saint-Gaudens's realistic approach and his rendering of Stevenson's emaciated form, perhaps out of ignorance to Stevenson's illness and the necessity of placing him in bed, rather than in a more customary pose.

The most incisive review came from the *New York Sun*. This critic did not depart from the majority in finding aspects of the work to criticize, but offered a more informed perspective. Unlike the writer for the *Art Amateur*, this individual was familiar with Stevenson and praised Saint-Gaudens's realistic approach as completely tasteful:

Only those who do not know the conditions under which the great romancer leads

his life and does his work will be surprised to find him portrayed in bed; in this case such a portrayal is simply natural, and therefore more artistically right than any other could be. Nor has the sculptor failed so to manage it that it delights the eye as well as satisfies the reason. . . . The portrait is an excellent one, and the spirit of the man, as well as his outward aspect, has been suggested.

The *Sun*'s critic did have one significant complaint. Having visited Saint-Gaudens's studio while the relief was still in the clay, the writer was disappointed to find that the sculptor had not submitted the original rectangular version. The critic, who had admired the original long horizontal shape, found the new circular format less beautiful and objected to Stevenson's now-truncated placement in bed. The circle, with its prominent line, also gave the work a more decorative tone out of keeping with the delicate handling of the relief and the prominent status of the sitter.¹²¹

One emerging trend should be noted in conjunction with this annual that with the appearance of exhibitors such as Potter, Niehaus, and Elwell, a second wave of foreign-trained sculptural talent was burgeoning. These artists were returning to the United States and beginning the process of reputation-building as Saint-Gaudens and Warner had fifteen years earlier. Critics were aware of this influx of newcomers: both the *Sun* and the *Times* specifically welcomed Potter's appearance and offered praise for *Sleeping Faun*.¹²² Saint-Gaudens himself fostered this new generation, both by involving them in his circle of studio assistants and recommending them for commissions. His belief in mentoring young artists most tangibly resulted in his accepting a teaching position at the Art Students League that same year.

Society of American Artists, New York, 1889

The eleventh exhibition of the Society of American Artists immediately followed the National Academy annual, opening on May 13, just two days after the Academy's close. Held at the Fifth Avenue Art Galleries, the exhibition ran only until June 15. Although not approaching the number of the Academy's perennially bloated annuals, the Society's show was its largest on record: 169 works by ninety-nine artists. The wide-ranging array was selected by twenty-seven men and hung by three, William M. J. Rice, Dwight Tryon, and Henry O. Walker. The show earned high praise from the press for its variety of subjects and style as well as uniform technical quality.¹²³ The *Evening Post* went as far as to proclaim it "one of the most interesting, complete, and distinguished exhibitions of American art ever brought together," representing "nearly all that is best in contemporary American art."¹²⁴ The selection of portraits by the likes of Chase, Sargent, Abbott Thayer, Frank Benson, and Edmund Tarbell, was particularly commended. Two emerging trends also deserve notice. Artists who were rigorously trained in Parisian academies submitted polished figural compositions as demonstrations of lessons well learned in life classes. These included Kenyon Cox's *A Yellow Rose* (unlocated) and Ernest Major's large *Saint Genevieve* (unlocated). On the other hand, other French-trained artists such as Robinson and Theodore Wendel, with seven and two submissions respectively, offered their responses to the "impressionism of to-day,"¹²⁵ seeking to render the palpable effects of light, air, and color in their landscapes. Working in a similar vein, Chase earned consistent praise for his appealing park and dock scenes.

The paucity of the sculpture at the Society exhibition—just three pieces—is testament to the failure of the mission of the Society's original founders to lastingly improve the status of sculpture in American exhibitions. Although sculpture of a small,

private nature had a successful presence in the early 1880s, the subsequent wavering in interest not coincidentally corresponded to Saint-Gaudens's own disillusion with the management of the organization and his increasing involvement in various monumental commissions. The Society's large membership, now numbering 109, still included only six sculptors and had not responded to the influx of French-trained American sculptural talent by admitting new names. At the same time that Society's power to reform aesthetically and ideologically was dwindling, the hegemony of the National Academy annuals was reaffirmed. The *New York Times*, in announcing Saint-Gaudens and Warner's elevations to Academician status, addressed the practical realities of opting to exhibit at the Academy. Calling the nomination of these sculptors "tardy justice, done to a couple of artists identified with a movement which was once a protest against the stagnation of the Academy," the writer acknowledged that this wide divide had been closed by including the best of the younger artists in the Academy annuals. While the quality of the Society exhibitions remained high, the reality was that "the Academy can always secure the best work of any artist, provided steps are taken to encourage him, because artists must live, and the Academy exhibitions remain the best market for work."¹²⁶ As a case in point, in 1889 Society sculptor-members French and Warner opted to show their work only at the Academy, while Elwell (elected to the Society in 1886) and Saint-Gaudens were represented at both venues. Other like-minded young artists such as Potter only showed at the Academy. For a sculptor the wide exposure at the Academy, and in the resulting press, was critical, not only for the works displayed, but also to enhance name recognition and attract potential clients for monumental work. The type of work sculptors displayed at the annuals—portraits and small ideal pieces—were bread-

and-butter fare that allowed them to pursue the monetarily inconsistent but more prestigious monumental commissions. Since the early 1880s Saint-Gaudens's consistent output of commissioned bas-reliefs suggests that he was no exception, and indeed, this pattern held true throughout his career.

After the early 1880s Saint-Gaudens remained peripherally involved in Society operations, serving on the Committee on Selection annually from 1886 until 1893. For the 1889 exhibition, his first showing in three years, he and Elwell were the only sculptors represented in this group. While the actual number of sculpture submissions is not known, that just three—all portraits from the inner circle—were chosen smacked of nepotism. Selection committee members Elwell sent a plaster bust of Miss Edna Munroe (unlocated) and Saint-Gaudens a bronze bas-relief of Mariana Griswold Van Rensselaer (fig. 60). Saint-Gaudens also must have seen to the inclusion of his former pupil MacMonnies's plaster medallion of Alexander Coles, Jr. (1888; private collection). Saint-Gaudens had recently exhibited MacMonnies's portrait in his studio after, much to his disgust, it was rejected by the jury for the 1889 Exposition Universelle in Paris.¹²⁷ Even still, both Elwell and Saint-Gaudens arguably sent their more important work to the Academy; Elwell's *Rebecca* and *Katharine* were ideal busts with broader commercial appeal and Saint-Gaudens's *Stevenson* depicted an internationally-known figure. Although completed as a gift without remuneration, it had potential widespread appeal. His portrait of Van Rensselaer, a critic whose own aesthetic maxims were in accord with the new movement artists, was admittedly more suited philosophically to the walls of the Society.

As discussed in Chapter 1, Van Rensselaer had been a mainstay in the promotion and maintenance of Saint-Gaudens's critical reputation since 1881 when she wrote on the *Farragut Monument* for *American Architect and Building News*. During the ensuing years Van Rensselaer and Saint-Gaudens nurtured a friendship based on admiration for each other's work and a desire to improve the climate for art in the United States. This bronze relief, inscribed "to Mariana Griswold Van Rensselaer," is tangible evidence of the sculptor's gratitude for her loyal comradeship and words of praise, most recently her assessment of the *Standing Lincoln* in Chicago published in *Century Magazine* in November 1887. The circumstances of the portrait's execution are vague, though it was almost certainly a token of friendship, as many of the artist's more inspired reliefs were. Many years later Van Rensselaer recalled that Saint-Gaudens sought solace in working on this relief because he encountered such difficulty with his portrait of Frances Folsom Cleveland (1887-92; plaster sketch, Saint-Gaudens National Historic Site), the young wife of President Grover Cleveland.¹²⁸ Correspondence between Saint-Gaudens and Van Rensselaer dates the casting of the first of two bronzes to 1888, suggesting that it must have been produced soon after the modeling of the relief was completed. This first bronze (private collection) was the one displayed at the Society; the better-known second, cast in 1890, is in the collection of the Metropolitan Museum of Art.¹²⁹

For his portrait of Van Rensselaer, Saint-Gaudens incorporated the standard compositional devices of his bas-relief formula including the profile orientation, undulating pictorial field, and artfully arranged inscriptions. The sitter is depicted facing left in a bust-length profile. Her hair is braided into a twist and secured at the back of her head, fully revealing a high collar in the fashionable Princess Alexandra style. A mass of

curls covers her forehead, while sketchy wisps of hair, rendered with single tool marks, are loosely delineated at her nape. The simple yet strong facial features are carefully outlined against the horizontal striations of the background. The portrait is terminated by a sharp undercutting of the bust, resulting in a greater degree of relief than elsewhere on the pictorial surface. From the prominent shoulder to the wispy strands of hair, Saint-Gaudens combined varying degrees of relief into a fresh and cohesive statement. The vertically elongated pictorial field is a departure from his earlier reliefs, demonstrating constant experimentation with form. The figure dominates the upper portion, leaving the bottom quarter for an inscription and band of three rosettes. Above Van Rensselaer's head is inscribed ANIMVS NON OPVS (The spirit, not the work), a maxim in accord with the sitter's aesthetic ideals, and indeed the ideals of the founding members of the Society.

A notice in the *Critic* in early 1889, personal in tone and written by Jeannette Gilder, offered generous praise for the *Van Rensselaer* portrait, calling it one of Saint-Gaudens's best reliefs and a "remarkable bit of plastic art."¹³⁰ However, for the Society exhibition, with such a dismal representation of sculpture, it is not surprising that the attention the press allotted to these works was equally sparse. Its scarcity was frequently commented upon ("trivial" said the *Magazine of Art*),¹³¹ though not analyzed. As usual, Saint-Gaudens garnered the most attention for his submission, and at least two critics anointed it the finest sculpture of the three.¹³² However, this year writers were unusually terse in their assessments of the sculptor's work, in part one might hypothesize because the sitter was a highly respected fellow critic. Only one ventured to remark on the realism of the likeness, proclaiming it "wonderful."¹³³

Other commentary repeats a theme that arose in the analyses of Saint-Gaudens's *Children of Jacob H. Schiff* at the 1886 Society exhibition—the duality of the sculptor's modeling style. As with the *Schiff Children*, critics offered conflicting assessments as to the degree of finish of the piece. The *Times* critic found it “full of refinement which is perhaps the highest quality of this gifted sculptor.”¹³⁴ In contrast, the *Art Amateur* criticized the lack of polish, “Mr. St. Gaudens has had a very promising subject, but has made little of it.”¹³⁵ The *Magazine of Art* concurred that the sculptor had failed to live up to potential, calling the *Van Rensselaer* “scarcely more than a sketch,”¹³⁶ an assessment one is hard-pressed to agree with when compared with his earlier reliefs of artist-friends. It is significant that this issue still preoccupied critics more than a decade after its emergence, for to some the level of technical finish corresponded to the degree of artistic maturity. Interestingly, this coming-of-age theme was addressed by a writer for the *Evening Post* in relation to the paintings in the 1889 show: “This, assuredly, is not a collection of interesting studies and of tentative beginnings, but of results accomplished. It is not the work of a small coterie of artists with a single aim and narrow views, but of ‘many men of many minds.’”¹³⁷

While Elwell's portrait was all but ignored by the press, MacMonnies's medallion portrait did attract its share of notice. This was not his first appearance at the Society, for he had contributed a portrait bust of his father in 1883 while he was still an assistant to Saint-Gaudens. Several critics, however, noted that he was currently training in Paris and welcomed him as a newcomer (which, as an up-and-coming sculptor, he still justifiably was). One even boldly, if not hyperbolically, proclaimed if he “has ‘staying power’ at all commensurate with his native talent, he is likely to go far.”¹³⁸ Critics admired

MacMonnies's proficient modeling and feeling for character.¹³⁹ However, several poked fun at the sitter, a gentleman whose tall top hat curiously commands the upper third of the composition.¹⁴⁰ "Good work expended on an unworthy subject," proclaimed the *Art Amateur*. Likewise, the *Times* wrote "the sitter was given with a tall pot on his head, a little joke for which the artist and victim will be sorry by and by."¹⁴¹

Society of American Artists, New York and Boston, 1891

The thirteenth exhibition of the Society of American Artists in 1891 was a signal moment for the second generation of French-trained sculptors, just as the 1880 annual had been for Saint-Gaudens and Warner. Held from April 27 to May 23, this exhibition, like its recent predecessors, was at the Fifth Avenue Art Galleries in two galleries. Once again, Saint-Gaudens served as the only sculptor on the committee on selection, a democratic group of twenty-seven men drawn from a total membership of 110. For sculptors, this exhibition represented a significant difference: French was a member of the hanging committee with H. Bolton Jones and Charles S. Reinhart. French, whose own critical reputation was still on the rise, was an apt choice, for he was diplomatic and well-liked by all. That there were attempts to mollify brewing discontent among the sculptors is evident not only in French's participation, but also in the election of five sculptors to membership that year, an act nearly doubling the number of sculptor members in the Society. Long-time exhibitor Hartley was finally accorded member status. The remaining four new members, like Hartley, had studied and/or exhibited in Paris. The eldest and most-advanced from a career standpoint, Edward Kemeys had submitted work to the

Society in 1890 and 1891. Two assistants of Saint-Gaudens were elected: MacMonnies made his third appearance in 1891 while Martiny debuted his work in 1890, but did not participate in 1891. Herbert Adams and Edmund Austin Stewardson were first-time participants, and immediately elected to membership.

The total number of sculptures exhibited was fifteen out of a record 250 works, hardly an improvement over past years. However, the thematic and stylistic range of the three-dimensional submissions pointed toward the new direction that American sculpture took during the 1890s, and especially after the turn of the century. The broadening of subjects—western and animal subjects, garden and fountain figures—represented a democratization of taste for sculpture that manifested in the rising popularity of the collectible and relatively affordable small bronze. The submissions of the ten sculptors offered a fairly representative cross-section from portraits to ideal subjects, bas-reliefs to statues, speculative plasters to finished marbles and bronzes. Stewardson was represented by an ambitious female nude in plaster, *The Bather* (1889-90; 1894 marble, The Metropolitan Museum of Art), which had earned an honorable mention in the Paris Salon of 1890.¹⁴² Dallin was also lately from Paris and a first-timer, with his full-size female ideal nude in plaster, *The Awakening of Spring* (1891; unlocated), a demonstration piece for his academic training.¹⁴³ The established animal sculptor Edward Kemeys displayed *Texan Bull Attacked by Jaguars* (by 1891; Smithsonian American Art Museum). Three bronze statuettes represented MacMonnies: *Diana* (1890; The Metropolitan Museum of Art), *Pan of Rohallion* (1890; Cleveland Museum of Art), and *Young Faun with Heron* (fig. 64), all reductions from full-size ideal compositions modeled in Paris. The

remaining participants—Adams, John Boyle, French, Hartley, Saint-Gaudens, and Warner—submitted the standard repertoire of portrait busts and medallions.

On the whole, the press considered the 1891 exhibition strong and meritorious with an admirably wide range of submissions. Several writers observed that major painters such as Sargent and Society president Chase had this year sent their best work to the Society rather than the Academy. Sargent's full-length portrait of young Beatrice Goelet (1890; private collection), with its aesthetic caged cockatoo and gilded lettering, took the top honors from a critical standpoint. Chase was represented by his portrait of *Alice*, a little girl holding a fluttering pink ribbon, and several Central Park scenes. As in sculpture, a new generation of names—Benson, Simmons, Tarbell, and Childe Hassam—had emerged in painting and these featured the artists that later seceded from the Society of American Artists in 1897 as the Ten American Painters. Innovative departures in brilliant color and light, based on French impressionist principles, were key points of discussion in the reviews. This development is best epitomized in Tarbell's stage-lit half-length *Opal Mirror* (1890; private collection), which the artist offered as an experiment with the effects of white and yellow light.

For the 1891 exhibition, Saint-Gaudens displayed a large plaster bas-relief of Violet Sargent (see fig. 61; marble version). Violet, a younger sister of John Singer Sargent, accompanied him on a trip to the United States from December 1889 to November 1890. Saint-Gaudens and Sargent met in Paris in the late 1870s when they worked together to send works by expatriate Americans to the Society of American Artists. In addition to the sculptor completing a small, loosely-modeled medal of Sargent (1880; American Academy of Arts and Letters, New York), they twice exchanged

friendship tokens; first a cast of Saint-Gaudens's *Bastien-Lepage* for a Capri watercolor of a figure (destroyed by fire, 1904). Later the sculptor completed *Violet Sargent* in return for Sargent's portrait of his wife and son (fig. 62). Saint-Gaudens met Violet Sargent in February 1890 at Chase's Tenth Street studio during a performance hosted by Sargent of the exotic and legendary Spanish dancer, Carmencita. Said to be captivated by Violet's profile, he arranged to model her likeness. Sittings for the portrait probably took place during the summer of 1890 in Cornish, but may have occurred as early as the spring.¹⁴⁴

Sargent attempted to sway Saint-Gaudens as to the most winning pose for his sister:

I have a sort of feeling that, given my sister's head, I should rather have a rond-bon—even ever so slight, than a bas relief. It seems to me owing to the shape of her face, cheeks, etc., it would be better. However you know best and I am sure you will do something charming in any case and I will admire it tremendously. . . . At any rate pardon my silly interference. I am surprised at myself behaving just like the worst bourgeois.¹⁴⁵

After completing preparatory sketches in pencil, ink, and clay,¹⁴⁶ in which Saint-Gaudens experimented with the pose of the figure, he arrived at a full-length format. Disregarding Sargent's "bourgeois" recommendations, he seated Violet three-quarters to the right with her head in profile. The vertical composition is one of Saint-Gaudens's most informal; here the sitter does not just pose, but engages in activity. The slender figure is dressed in a stylish short-sleeved gown and sits with legs crossed. The guitar that Violet tunes creates a dominant horizontal bisecting the composition while a decorative stepped bench upon which she sits features s-scroll supports and a beribboned central plaque signed and dated by the artist. The sitter's name is inscribed in the upper right field, encircled by an ivy wreath. Finally, the perimeter of the relief is encased with a border of egg-and-dart molding.

The *Sargent*, when grouped in the company of other sculptures, received the usual casually-dispensed praise from several writers.¹⁴⁷ In the main, however, Saint-Gaudens did not fare at all well in critical reviews of his plaster relief. This assessment may be measured not only in what was said, but also by the relatively scant attention given to the *Sargent* in comparison to the press accorded to Saint-Gaudens's previously exhibited works. For instance, Cook completely ignored Saint-Gaudens in his lengthy review of the exhibition, which included an ample section on sculpture.¹⁴⁸ Others observed that the artist had not lived up to his usual standards. The work was "strangely trivial" to the *Magazine of Art*, and "not very serious, but artistic" to the *Herald*.¹⁴⁹ To these writers, Saint-Gaudens had departed from a familiar and successful approach to relief sculpture in his attempts to emulate Sargent's novel portrait devices. In the *Art Amateur*, Malcolm Bell lamented the lack of the decorative qualities typically associated with the sculptor's work and particularly criticized the guitar strap that seemed to merge into her necklace and appeared "uncomfortable coiled around her throat."¹⁵⁰

If one major criticism may fairly be leveled at the portrait, it is the awkwardness of the pose, a pose that attempts to emulate the spirit of Sargent's more casual portraits. That the disposition of the figure was more suited to a fluidly painted portrait than a sculpted one was observed by several critics, among them the one for the *Magazine of Art* who observed that the low-relief "takes a view of the subject far better fitted to painting than sculpture." The pose, while natural enough, was "a little undignified for enduring bronze or marble."¹⁵¹ The writer for the *Sun* also found Saint-Gaudens not at his best and offered the most perceptive commentary on the *Sargent*'s shortcomings:

It is a charming piece of work, but perhaps because of the sitter's charming type was less well adapted to the sculptor's than to the painter's hand, we miss

something of the dignity, the vigor and high distinction that we have grown to associate with St. Gaudens's name. It could not be more delicate or sincere, it could not be more graceful or refined, and perhaps those who have never seen anything else from the same studio will not feel that it is lacking in any direction. But one can only judge St. Gaudens fairly when one judges him by the very best that has come out of his studio. If his half-length figure of Bastien-Lepage . . . hung beside this relief, the point we wish to make would explain itself without need of any words.¹⁵²

For the first time in the history of Saint-Gaudens's participation in Society shows, other sculptors vastly overshadowed him in the critical analyses. This trend reflects the inevitable democratization of critical taste with Saint-Gaudens's reputation as the country's leading sculptor secured. The potential of younger talent to broaden and reinforce the nationalistic concept of American sculpture on American shores was no less appealing to certain members of the press.

Those other artists of Saint-Gaudens's "generation," such as Warner or Hartley, were equally marginalized. Warner too endured negative criticism for his marble bas-relief medallion of the five children of Charles Erskine Scott Wood (1890; private collection).¹⁵³ Instead, two younger artists, Adams and MacMonnies, took away top critical honors for works that departed from previous thematic and stylistic norms and were harbingers of trends to come. Adams's marble portrait of his wife (fig. 63) and MacMonnies's three bronze statuettes, *Diana, Pan of Rohallion*, and *Young Faun with Heron* (fig. 64), were all celebrated for formal innovation within the framework of tradition. To the critics, Adams's marble portrait recalled Italian Renaissance prototypes, but its fresh, impressionistic treatment of surface owed a debt to French master Auguste Rodin.¹⁵⁴ MacMonnies's three ideal pieces, grounded in French principles of modeling, indicated a shift to the preference for the ornamental commercial bronze. Indeed, the

catalogue noted that “reproductions of these statuettes may be had,”¹⁵⁵ a proclamation seemingly contrary to the professed anti-commercial ideals of the Society.

Saint-Gaudens’s reaction to the nearly unilateral negative response to his *Violet Sargent* in 1891 is unknown. Following the close of the Society’s exhibition in New York, the paintings and sculptures were displayed with little variation at the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston. On view from June 4 to July 5, the exhibition was deemed by the Museum “one of the strongest showings of modern American art made in this city.”¹⁵⁶ In Boston, Saint-Gaudens’s submission was all but ignored by the local press, who did not analyze the sculpture with any astuteness or depth.¹⁵⁷ The *Boston Post* noted the presence of portraits by Adams and French, while the *Evening Transcript* found “the sculpture are of an unusually high order of character. . . . It is hardly necessary to exalt Mr. St. Gaudens’ bas-relief portrait of Miss Violet Sargent.”¹⁵⁸

Three years later Saint-Gaudens was not deterred from sending—nor Sargent from lending—the marble translation of *Violet Sargent* (fig. 61) to the Society of American Artists annual. The 1894 show was held in the new galleries of the American Fine Arts Society on West Fifty-seventh Street (now the Art Students League) with a small central gallery devoted to sculpture. If the criticism to *Violet Sargent* in the 1891 exhibition was predominantly negative, then surprisingly, the reaction in 1894, was warm and welcoming. The relief was illustrated in the accompanying catalogue, as was Adams’s plaster *La Jeunesse* (ca. 1894; wood and marble version, 1899-1900, The Metropolitan Museum of Art), the other critically-favored sculpture of this exhibition.¹⁵⁹ One review, which elaborates on similar sentiments expressed by other writers, suffices to demonstrate this new, diametrically opposite response: “Perhaps Mr. St. Gaudens’s

relief portrait . . . will be accepted without demur as the best thing here and one of Mr. St. Gaudens's happiest hits. It is certainly consummately skilful and entirely graceful in arrangement and composition."¹⁶⁰ It is impossible to ascertain why this overall shift in acceptance for *Violet Sargent* occurred; perhaps the composition presented itself better in marble, perhaps some appreciated its relative calm in the face of the uniformly bright palette of the paintings on display. At the very least, it is testament to the capricious nature of criticism.

Society of American Artists Retrospective, New York, 1892

It is fitting that the last exhibition this dissertation analyzes is a retrospective exhibition surveying the first fifteen years of activity at the Society of American Artists. This time frame matches exactly the more concentrated period during which Saint-Gaudens displayed his sculptures at exhibition venues and received extensive critical feedback for works other than his monuments. Aside from Saint-Gaudens's participation at the Society in 1894, mentioned above, the 1892 retrospective represented a turning point from exhibitor to organizational figurehead. Saint-Gaudens returned to a position of management, rejoining the board of control during 1892 and 1893. In these two years, its five members included Chase as president and La Farge as vice-president. Saint-Gaudens also served on the committee of seven for the 1892 retrospective exhibition, which was chaired by Beckwith.

This retrospective exhibition and Saint-Gaudens's shifting role must also be looked at in a larger context. Open from December 5 to 25, 1892, it occurred just months

before the Chicago World's Columbian Exposition, which ran from May 1 to October 31, 1893. The Society's show represented a summation of an era of growth and anticipated a new future in which American art more than ever competed on an international level. This turning-point theme was seized upon by the critics and pervaded their analysis of the exhibition. As the writer for the *Daily Tribune* observed, the "exhibition supplies a measure which even the most pessimistic observer of our National progress must admit to be gratifying and encouraging. . . . Before such an exhibition belief in the future of native art is confirmed and augmented."¹⁶¹ Some rightly noted that the show, despite its high quality, did not present an entirely representative look at American art production since works by such varied artists as Winslow Homer, Albert Pinkham Ryder, and Eastman Johnson were not among those exhibited.¹⁶²

The retrospective exhibition was held at American Fine Arts Society, the new headquarters for the Society, the Architectural League, and the Art Students League. The objects were installed in the two principal first-floor galleries, which were fitted with electric lights for evening viewing. For sculptors, this change represented an improvement in display conditions, both in the scale of the galleries and the enhanced natural lighting. This show was the Society's largest ever, with 366 objects by members and non-members alike, in addition to a large selection of Old Master prints from the unparalleled collection of George Vanderbilt. The participating sculptors were familiar exhibitors: Saint-Gaudens, Warner, Hartley, French, Elwell, Adams, and the late Stewardson. Three others had been Saint-Gaudens's studio assistants: his brother Louis, MacMonnies, and Martiny. Of their twenty-one submissions, thirteen had previously

been displayed in Society annuals and six would again be shown at the World's Columbian Exposition.¹⁶³

Saint-Gaudens's three sculptures offered an interesting cross-section of the work that he exhibited over the past fifteen years. The most familiar in the context of the Society's history was a bronze *Bastien-Lepage*, a summation of Saint-Gaudens's innovative bas-relief technique that was shown to great acclaim in 1881. This successful work had been widely exhibited over the years, and served as a useful measure against which critics could evaluate the artist's new productions. The sculptor's other bas-relief was his endearing bronze portrait of his seventeen-month-old son Homer, exhibited in 1882, which he kept on display in his studio. Saint-Gaudens also submitted his powerful *Sherman* bust, which had been so favorably received at the National Academy in 1888.

In the main, coverage of the sculpture resorted to listing and summarily describing the works and provided almost no stylistic or contextual analysis. Compared to the perceptive, spirited writing of the late 1870s and early 1880s, it seemed to have taken a step backward. The press focused little attention on "old chestnuts" such as Warner's *Weir*, the sensation of the 1880 exhibition, or Louis Saint-Gaudens's esteemed *Piping Pan* from 1882.¹⁶⁴ Even Adam's marble portrait of his wife and MacMonnies's three statuettes—*Diana*, *Pan of Rohallion*, and *Young Faun with Heron*—which had earned acclaim in 1891, were remarked on only in passing. Saint-Gaudens, too, received only brief commentary. For instance, the *Magazine of Art* summed up his contributions as "all excellent small pieces, but scarcely representative of his big work."¹⁶⁵

The only sculpture that excited consistent and prolonged interest was Daniel Chester French's alto-relief group *The Angel of Death and the Sculptor from the Milmore*

Memorial (fig. 65), which in bronze had earned a third-class medal in the Paris Salon of 1892. Its innovative composition, sensitive interpretation of death, and life-size scale made it the most conspicuous and critically esteemed sculpture of the retrospective. French himself noted to his brother that “the newspapers have puffed it,” while to his stepmother he wrote, “Mrs. Van Rensselaer has done full justice to it.”¹⁶⁶ French cited the major exception to the dearth of sculptural coverage for this exhibition, Van Rensselaer’s article “Current Questions of Art” for the *New York World*.¹⁶⁷ She devoted a large portion of her article to the sculpture exhibited at the retrospective, and discussed the works with her usual eloquent insight. Finding the sculpture shown “to better advantage than ever before,” she offered in-depth analyses of portraits by Adams, Hartley, and Stewardson, Saint-Gaudens’s *Sherman*, and especially French’s *Milmore*. Her ability to penetrate to the core essence of a work is manifested in her description of the *Sherman* as a portrait not only of likeness, but of character:

Nothing finer has been done in modern times, in America or elsewhere, in the way of a portrait which needed to explain not an ordinary personality but a great public character. . . . He has made us understand not merely how his model looked, but how a man who looked in just this way was the only man who could have done just the work which history puts to his credit.¹⁶⁸

Promoting her nationalistic agenda, Van Rensselaer concluded that an American-based school of sculptors was finally emerging: “the band is steadily increasing . . . although good American sculptors are not nearly so numerous as good American painters, the best among them stand at the very head of the artists of our country.”¹⁶⁹ To Van Rensselaer, Saint-Gaudens stood at the forefront of his profession with a coalescing band of talent in tow.

The 1890s: New Directions as Sculptor, Exhibitor, and Organizer

During the mid to late 1890s, the dimensions of Saint-Gaudens's role as America's leading sculptor shifted. In short, as his ambitions changed, so did his priorities and his loyalties. Saint-Gaudens himself acknowledged that by the late 1880s his pace was frenetic. As he later reminisced: "The years that followed [the dedication of the *Randall Monument* in 1884] with the multitudinous complexities and delays of a large amount of work will make what follows very disconnected. In fact the production of my work was so confused and dragged in most cases to lengths which would have taxed the patience of angels."¹⁷⁰ In the early 1890s Saint-Gaudens was engaged on the following monumental projects, all in various stages of completion and/or setback: *Robert Gould Shaw* for Boston (unveiled 1897); *General John A. Logan* for Chicago (1897); *Garfield* for Philadelphia (1896); *Adams* for Washington, D.C. (1891); and *Diana* (1st version, 1891; 2nd, 1893), *Peter Cooper* (1897), and *Sherman* (1903) for New York. In this context, his comment to Cornish landowner and friend Charles C. Beaman in 1891 is readily understood: "My time is so occupied by my larger work that I [sic, am] refusing to do medallions for a price that would more than pay for the entire property [Saint-Gaudens's land in Cornish]."¹⁷¹ As the harried sculptor delegated more to his studio assistants in the 1890s and 1900s, particularly on smaller and less important works, there was a noticeable falling-off of quality in and formulaic appearance to many of his bas-reliefs and bust portraits.

Although Saint-Gaudens continued to exhibit at American art venues through 1900, especially at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, his motives for

displaying his sculpture had clearly moved beyond the need to have institutional breeding grounds for his critical reputation. The sculptor's record of participation became even more inconsistent, and there is no discernable pattern to the forums and cities in which his work was shown. His lack of involvement, especially at the Society of American Artists, drew comment from the press. When he did not exhibit at the Society in 1892, the *Evening Post* characterized his absence as "almost a personal loss to each visitor."¹⁷² Saint-Gaudens's declining interest may be attributed on the one hand to his departure from consistently producing smaller private portraits—the most readily-exhibited works—and on the other to his increasingly commercial outlook on his small sculptures. Following the lead of MacMonnies, Saint-Gaudens realized the potential of small bronze replicas to provide a steady flow of income. From the mid-1890s, he began to cast reductions after *Diana*, *Robert Louis Stevenson*, *The Puritan*, and *Amor Caritas* in both the United States and France, thus relinquishing his basically private patronage base based on friendship and connections to an anonymous general public. The bronzes were distributed through Tiffany & Co. and Gorham in New York, and Doll and Richards in Boston, offering the sculptor far greater and more consistent audience exposure to his works than periodic exhibitions did.

Also demanding Saint-Gaudens's attention in the early 1890s were involvements in preparations for the World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago and in the founding of the National Sculpture Society in New York, involvements that underscore his status as a dean of his profession and designated conferee on issues regarding its professionalism. In February 1891, Saint-Gaudens made the first of several trips to Chicago for organizational meetings with the architects of the fairground buildings. In company with

the likes of Hunt, McKim, and Frederick Law Olmsted, Saint-Gaudens uttered his oft-cited comment to Daniel Burnham testifying to this country's cultural and collaborative coming of age: "Look here, old fellow, do you realize that this is the greatest meeting of artists since the fifteenth century!"¹⁷³ The sculptor advised Burnham, director of works, on the overall sculptural program for the fair and served as a juror for the department of fine arts.¹⁷⁴ Saint-Gaudens used his influence to delegate prize commissions for the Court of Honor to MacMonnies for his *Columbian Fountain* (1891-93) and French for his colossal *Republic* (1891-93) while his assistant Mary Lawrence carried out a heroic-size *Columbus* (1892-93; all destroyed) under his direction. Saint-Gaudens's one sculptural contribution was the obverse design for the award medal, a commission that was fraught with controversy.¹⁷⁵

Soon after the opening of the World's Columbian Exposition in May, the National Sculpture Society was founded, its mission to promote a democratic fostering of taste for sculpture and to serve as an overarching organization for a specialized group of professionals.¹⁷⁶ The Sculpture Society, which grew out of sculptors' successful cooperation for the ambitious outdoor program at the Columbian Exposition, was mandated to protect their interests in large-scale collaborative commissions and to hold exhibitions for the display and sale of sculpture for the domestic and private markets.¹⁷⁷ This organization was also initiated in part to redress marginal exhibition conditions for sculptors in relation to painters, ironically, also one of the founding tenets of the Society of American Artists in 1877. And, as with the Society of American Artists, the National Sculpture Society was the collective brainchild of artists and critics. Saint-Gaudens was opposed to the seemingly commercial motives of the Sculpture Society and initially

resisted its organization.¹⁷⁸ However, he eventually relented in the interest of professional unity, but was never involved in the innermost management of the National Sculpture Society, his name alone a valuable asset. Saint-Gaudens was elected to the original executive council of seventeen, along with Frederick Ruckstull, French, Warner, and Ward, who was named president. In addition, long-time sculptor allies Richard Watson Gilder served as second vice-president and Charles de Kay as treasurer, yet another example of their central roles in New York's cultural life.

Saint-Gaudens's remarkable Old and New World successes after 1893 and the honors that were bestowed on him are beyond the scope of this dissertation, but a brief postscript is germane. Although other sculptors—Paul Wayland Bartlett, French, and MacMonnies—had earned critical encomiums in recent Paris Salons, Saint-Gaudens maintained a surprisingly isolationist stance since his participation in the Salon of 1880, not cultivating a broader reputation. He resisted his French friend Paul Bion's frequent urgings to send his work to Paris, the front line of contemporary sculpture.¹⁷⁹ Since leaving Paris in 1880, Saint-Gaudens had visited the city only once and briefly at that, to see the Exposition Universelle in 1889. By the 1890s, Saint-Gaudens's desire to move beyond the vacuum of his coddling circle of critics had intensified. Bion alluded to this safety net in May 1895, reminding Saint-Gaudens: "Once rid of that circle of flatterers and admirers, you would see yourself in a light more brutal but also more true."¹⁸⁰ And again in August 1896, Bion pressured him about prolonged work on the *Shaw Memorial*: "I think you have come to a decisive moment in which you must renew your lease with public opinion which has up until now spoiled you in making you a favorite."¹⁸¹ As Saint-Gaudens's critical and professional standing in this country reached epic

proportions, his ambitions finally turned to measuring his talents in the context of his international contemporaries. Following the long-awaited dedication of the *Shaw* in 1897, Saint-Gaudens heeded Bion's exhortations and relocated to Paris, opening a new chapter in the sculptor's career, one that reinvigorated and expanded his critical reputation.

Notes to Chapter 5

¹ See, for instance, Saint-Gaudens's letter to the editor in "In Favor of Free Art," *Critic* 7 (19 December 1885): 293. He felt that a tariff against imported works was poor treatment to the countries where "nine-tenths of our artists" were educated. Letters by John Singer Sargent, J. Alden Weir, William Merritt Chase, Kenyon Cox, and Daniel Huntington, among others, also urged the tariff's repeal. On the topic, see Kimberly Orcutt, "Research Note: Buy American? The Debate over the Art Tariff," *American Art* 16 (Fall 2002): 82-91.

² "A National Society of Arts," *Critic* 3 (28 March 1885): 150-51. Among the other New York trustees were Charles de Kay, Montague Marks, Frank Millet, Weir, and Stanford White.

³ The circular, dated April 11, 1887, was printed in the *Studio*, among other publications. See "Monument to Bastien-Lepage," *Studio*, n.s., 2 (May 1887): 207.

⁴ Annette Blaugrund et al., *Paris 1889: American Artists at the Universal Exposition*, exh. cat. (Philadelphia: Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts; New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1989), 17. Other artists chosen as juror representatives from the Society of American Artists included James Carroll Beckwith, William A. Coffin, Kenyon Cox, and J. Alden Weir.

⁵ On the Players Club, see "The Players," *Critic* 11 (5 January 1889): 9. Other non-actor members included Richard Watson Gilder, Charles C. Beaman, William Tecumseh Sherman, Weir, and White. White renovated the clubhouse, located at 16 Gramercy Square.

⁶ Cox to Jacob D. Cox (his father), 16 December 1884, Kenyon Cox Papers, Avery Architectural and Fine Arts Library, Columbia University, New York, reprinted in H. Wayne Morgan, ed., *An Artist of the American Renaissance: The Letters of Kenyon Cox, 1883-1919* (Kent, Ohio, and London: Kent State University Press, 1995), 48. On the studio concerts, see Homer Saint-Gaudens, ed., *The Reminiscences of Augustus Saint-Gaudens* (New York: Century Co., 1913), 1:306-11 (hereafter cited as *Reminiscences*).

⁷ See, for instance, "The Fine Arts: Art Notes," *Critic* 6 (November 27, 1886): 266. See also John H. Dryfhout, *The Work of Augustus Saint-Gaudens* (Hanover, N.H.: University Press of New England, 1982), 195, no. 145.

⁸ These designs were by the sculptors Thomas Ball, David Richards, Richard Henry Park, and possibly Leonard Wells Volk. The latter two were Chicagoans. Saint-Gaudens declined to enter the original competition as he had vowed never to compete for monumental commissions since his discouraging experience with the *Charles Sumner* statue in Boston in 1875.

⁹ Lois Goldreich Marcus, "Studies in Nineteenth-Century American Sculpture: Augustus Saint-Gaudens (1848-1907)" (Ph.D. diss., City University of New York, 1979), 109. For the Bates estate, Saint-Gaudens also modeled the *Eli Bates Fountain*, "Storks at Play" (1886-87; Lincoln Park, Chicago) with the assistance of Frederick MacMonnies. See Dryfhout, *The Work of Augustus Saint-Gaudens*, 156-57, no. 123. For extended discussions of the *Lincoln* commission, see Marcus, "Studies in Nineteenth-Century American Sculpture," 103-44; and Joyce Karen Schiller, "The Artistic Collaboration of Augustus Saint-Gaudens and Stanford White" (Ph.D. diss., Washington University, Saint Louis, 1997), 203-58.

¹⁰ *Reminiscences*, 1:312.

¹¹ For further discussion, see Marcus, "Studies in Nineteenth-Century American Sculpture," 114-15; [Leonard Wells Volk], "The Lincoln Life-Mask and How It Was Made," *Century Magazine* 23 (December 1881): 223-28; and Gilder to Homer Saint-Gaudens, 25 March 1909, Augustus Saint-Gaudens Papers, Dartmouth College Library, Hanover, N.H., microfilm reel 24, frames 292-93 (hereafter cited as Saint-Gaudens Papers, DCL).

¹² "Worldly Comment," *New York World*, 18 July 1883, 4. See also Schiller, "The Artistic Collaboration of Augustus Saint-Gaudens and Stanford White," 247 n. 116, which references ca. 1884 press clippings to that effect in the Lincoln Collection at the Chicago Historical Society.

¹³ Schiller, "The Artistic Collaboration of Augustus Saint-Gaudens and Stanford White," 227.

¹⁴ "A. Lincoln for Chicago," *New York Times*, 26 June 1887, 4.

¹⁵ "The Fine Arts: Art Notes," *Critic* 8 (2 July 1887): 6.

¹⁶ For a thorough description of the dedication, see "The Ceremony of the Unveiling," *Chicago Tribune*, 23 October 1887, 10.

¹⁷ "Chicago's Lincoln Statue," *New York Times*, 20 October 1887, 1.

¹⁸ "Eli Bates' Great Gift: Saint-Gaudens' Colossal Statue of Lincoln," *Chicago Tribune*, 20 October 1887, 1.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹ M. G. Van Rensselaer, "Saint Gaudens's Lincoln," *Century Magazine* 35 (November 1887): 37-39. In the same issue was "Abraham Lincoln: A History. The President-Elect at Springfield," by J. G. Nicholay et al. (64-88).

²² "The American Architect and Building News for 1887. A Preliminary Prospectus," *American Architect and Building News* 20 (18 December 1886): 296.

²³ See M. G. Van Rensselaer, "The Growth of Ecclesiastical Decorative Art in America," *American Architect and Building News* 21 (11 June 1887): 279-80.

²⁴ Van Rensselaer, "Saint Gaudens's Lincoln," 37.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 39.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 37.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 39.

²⁸ "The Fine Arts: Art Notes," *Critic* 8 (29 October 1887): 222.

²⁹ "The Fine Arts: Art Notes," *Critic* 8 (19 November 1887): 263.

³⁰ Cox to Helen Finney Cox (his mother), 30 May 1884, Cox Papers, Avery Library.

³¹ Saint-Gaudens to Cox, 29 June 1886, Cox Papers, Avery Library.

³² Saint-Gaudens to Gilder, 22 May 1886, Saint-Gaudens Papers, DCL microfilm reel 7, frame 535. William A. Coffin, then writing for the *Evening Post* and the *Nation*, "went to his studio to see the statue of Lincoln before it was sent to the foundry. . . . When I saw the Lincoln . . . I remember how careful Saint-Gaudens was to explain to me the meaning of the emblems incorporated in the chair, such as the oak leaves, palms and pine cones, the eagle, the fasces and the lion's claws—'symbols' in contrast to the simple democratic figure of the President in coat and trousers." William A. Coffin, "Reminiscences of Augustus Saint-Gaudens, 1908 (typescript), in Saint-Gaudens Papers, DCL, microfilm reel 36, frames 132-45.

³³ Kenyon Cox, "Augustus Saint Gaudens," *Century Magazine* 35 (November 1887): 28-37. The quote is from p. 28.

³⁴ The drawing was included in *The Arts of the American Renaissance*, exh. cat. (New York: Hirsch and Adler Galleries, 1985), 26. It erroneously notes that the drawing was based on the Metropolitan's *Butler* marble, which was not carved until 1906-7.

³⁵ Cox, "Augustus Saint Gaudens," 28.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 30.

³⁷ Marcus, "Studies in Nineteenth-Century American Sculpture," 142 n. 104. An editorial note at the end of Cox's piece states: "When the above article was written Mr. St. Gaudens's Lincoln had not been modeled" (37).

³⁸ Schiller, "The Artistic Collaboration of Augustus Saint-Gaudens and Stanford White," 189, 199, also reaches this conclusion.

³⁹ See "The Chapin Statue Unveiled," *New York Times*, 25 November 1887, 1; "Statue in Honor of Deacon Chapin," *New York Sun*, 25 November 1887, 2; "Unveiling of 'The Puritan,'" *New York World*, 25 November 1887, 1; and "Unveiling the Chapin Statue," *New York Daily Tribune*, 25 November 1887, 1. Only the *World* ventured beyond the descriptive, calling "Mr. St. Gaudens's treatment of his subject . . . strikingly free and original and devoid of all conventional lines."

⁴⁰ "The Fine Arts: Art Notes," *Critic* 7 (26 February 1887): 104; 8 (November 12, 1887): 248; 8 (19 November 1887): 263; and 8 (3 December 1887): 287.

⁴¹ Cox, "Augustus Saint Gaudens," 30. The illustration reproduced in the article (33) documents how *The Puritan* appeared in 1886 when Cox, Gilder, and others were invited to see it in Saint-Gaudens's studio. See also Marcus, "Studies in Nineteenth-Century American Sculpture," 152-53.

⁴² Cox, "Augustus Saint Gaudens," 34.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 35.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 37.

⁴⁵ J[ames] R[ipley] W[ellman] Hitchcock, "Some Possible Exhibitions," *Art Amateur* 12 (February 1885): 63. Harvard-educated Hitchcock joined the *New York Daily Tribune* in 1882 as art critic (replacing Clarence Cook) and held that position for eight years. In 1890 he became a literary advisor for D. Appleton and Company, and in 1906 took on the same role at Harper and Brothers. Hitchcock was the author of numerous books on topics ranging from American etchings and watercolors to American world's fairs to the American West. See *Dictionary of American Biography*, s.v. "Hitchcock, James Ripley Wellman."

⁴⁶ On the Prize Fund exhibitions, see Gerald D. Bolas, "The Early Years of the American Art Association, 1879-1900" (Ph.D. diss., City University of New York, 1998), esp. 177-96.

⁴⁷ "The Prize Fund Exhibition," *Art Amateur* 15 (July 1886): 25; "Miscellaneous Topics: The Prize Fund Exhibition," *American Art* 2 (1888): 69; and Bolas, "The Early Years of the American Art Association," 190, 193.

⁴⁸ "The Architectural League of New York," *American Architect and Building News* 9 (16 April 1881): 184.

⁴⁹ *Catalogue of the Fifth Annual Exhibition of the Architectural League of New York* (New York, 1889), n.p.

⁵⁰ The 1891-92 annual was held between December 24, 1891, and January 9, 1892, at the Fifth Avenue Art Galleries. Saint-Gaudens showed his relief portrait of Bessie Smith White. See *Catalogue of the Seventh Annual Exhibition of the Architectural League* (New York: Robinson and Baker Publishers, 1891), 66, no. 505, as "Portrait—Bass [sic] Relief." The only extended mention of the sculptor's work, which was negative in tone and most likely authored by Clarence Cook, was "The Exhibition of the Architectural League," *Studio*, n.s., 7 (2 January 1892): 42.

⁵¹ *Catalogue of the Third Annual Exhibition of the Architectural League of New York* (New York, 1887).

⁵² "The Fine Arts: Art Notes," *Critic* 8 (12 November 1887): 249. Saint-Gaudens's name is not listed in the catalogue along with the other jurors. In addition the catalogue includes Russell Sturgis, so one may speculate that Sturgis stood in for Saint-Gaudens.

⁵³ In E. W. M., "New York Doings: St. Gaudens's Bronze Relief of Dr. Bellows," *Boston Evening Transcript*, 9 June 1886, 6, the author noted that Saint-Gaudens "was able to make use, in modelling the face and head, of the six or seven sittings which Dr. Bellows gave the late Hiram Powers when he visited Florence. Bellows recorded this experience in "Seven Sittings with Powers, the Sculptor," *Appleton's Journal of Literature, Science, and Art* 1 (1869): 342-43, 359-61, 402-4, 470-71, 595-97; 2 (1869): 54-55, 106-8. See also Richard P. Wunder, *Hiram Powers: Vermont Sculptor, 1805-1873* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1991), 2:19-20, no. 6.

⁵⁴ "Art Notes," *Art Critic*, n.s., 5 (19 June 1886): 309. On the unveiling, see also "In Memory of Dr. Bellows," *New York Times*, 3 June 1886, 2; and E. W. M., *Boston Evening Transcript*, 9 June 1886, 6: "Viewed as a whole, the work is one of notable excellence and is a decided acquisition to the art treasures of the city, perpetuating the face, figure and character of a great preacher and a public-spirited leader among men."

⁵⁵ Dryfhout, *The Work of Augustus Saint-Gaudens*, 150.

⁵⁶ "Third Exhibition of the Architectural League," *Art Amateur* 18 (February 1888): 56.

⁵⁷ "The Architectural League," *New York Daily Tribune*, 19 December 1887, 4.

⁵⁸ See Saint-Gaudens to Loring, 3 March 1881, Director's Correspondence, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C., microfilm reel 550, frame 579.

⁵⁹ See Saint-Gaudens to Loring, 18 April 1881, Director's Correspondence, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, Archives of American Art, microfilm reel 550, frame 584.

⁶⁰ "The Spring Academy," *New York Times*, 31 March 1888, 4.

⁶¹ Minute Books of the National Academy of Design, 19 April 1888, National Academy of Design, New York. Also elected as associates at this meeting were painters Robert Blum, George de Forest Brush, William Merritt Chase, Charles Courtney Curran, Will H. Low, Robert C. Minor, H. Siddons Mowbray, Henry Rankin Poore, and sculptor Olin Warner. See also "Art Notes," *Critic* 10 (28 April 1888): 210; and Trudie Grace, "The National Academy of Design and the Society of American Artists: Rivals Viewed by Critics, 1878-1906," in David Dearing, ed., *Rave Reviews: American Art and Its Critics, 1826-1925*, exh. cat. (New York: National Academy of Design, 2000), 112-13.

⁶² The six full sculptor Academicians were founding member John Frazee, Robert Launitz (1833), Henry Kirke Brown (1851), Launt Thompson (1862), John Rogers (1863), John Quincy Adams Ward (1863), and Charles Calverley (1874). These low statistics are due in part to the stipulation that Academicians had to live in New York, and of course most prominent mid-century sculptors were abroad in Italy. This ruling was rescinded in 1869.

⁶³ Warner had been rejected for associate membership in the Academy in 1879, probably due to his alliance with the Society of American Artists. See Jennifer A. Martin Bienenstock, "The Formation and Early Years of the Society of American Artists: 1877-1884" (Ph.D. diss., City University of New York, 1983), 91, for further discussion of the widespread rejection of Society members.

⁶⁴ "National Academy Exhibition: An Excellent Display by American Artists," *New York Mail and Express*, 31 March 1888, 5.

⁶⁵ According to a calculation in *Harper's Weekly*, all but four of the Society's first twenty-two members participated in the 1888 Academy annual. See "The Academy Exhibition," *Harper's Weekly* 32 (7 April 1888): 250.

⁶⁶ "The Academy Spring Show: Annual Exhibition of Pictures at the Old Institution," *New York World*, 31 March 1888, 6.

⁶⁷ "The Academy Exhibition," *New York Evening Post*, 13 April 1888, 4.

⁶⁸ [Clarence Cook], "National Academy of Design: Sixty-third Annual Exhibition. First Notice," *Studio*, n.s., 3 (May 1888): 85-86.

⁶⁹ "The Academy of Design: Sixty-third Annual Exhibition," *New York Daily Tribune*, 31 March 1888, 4. The hanging committee for the annual consisted of J. Carroll Beckwith, Louis Lang, Jervis McEntee, William Magrath, Homer D. Martin, George W. Maynard,

and Roswell Morse Shurtleff. See *Catalogue of the Sixty-third Annual Exhibition of the National Academy of Design, 1888* (New York, 1888), [3].

⁷⁰ See, for instance, *New York World*, 31 March 1888, 6; Mrs. Schuyler Van Rensselaer, "Fine Arts: The Academy Exhibition. I," *Independent* 40 (19 April 1888): 487; "The Fine Arts: The National Academy Exhibition," *Critic* 9 (7 April 1888): 171; *New York Mail and Express*, 31 March 1888, 5; and "The National Academy Exhibition," *New York Sun*, 1 April 1888, 16. For a scathing opinion about the quality of the show, see Nym Crinkle [Andrew C. Wheeler], "Nym Crinkle's Impressions: His Views about the Pictures at the Academy Exhibition," *New York World*, 9 April 1888, 5. Wheeler's primary affiliation was as drama critic for the *New York Leader* (1870-ca. 1897), but he occasionally wrote for the *New York World* and the *New York Sun*. See Margaret C. Conrads, "Winslow Homer and His Critics in the 1870s" (Ph.D. diss., City University of New York, 1999), 483.

⁷¹ "The Fine Arts: The National Academy Exhibition," *Critic* 9 (7 April 1888): 171.

⁷² *Ibid.*; and "The Society of American Artists," *New York Times*, 9 April 1888, 5.

⁷³ Mrs. Schuyler Van Rensselaer, *Independent* 40 (19 April 1888): 487.

⁷⁴ *Catalogue of the Sixty-third Annual Exhibition of the National Academy of Design, 1888*, 25, 36.

⁷⁵ *New York Sun*, 1 April 1888, 16. For similar assessments, see *New York Evening Post*, 13 April 1888, 4; and [Clarence Cook], "National Academy of Design: Sixty-third Annual Exhibition. Second Notice," *Studio*, n.s., 3 (June 1888): 113.

⁷⁶ Bessie was the youngest of thirteen children of Judge J. Lawrence Smith of Smithtown, Long Island, and the sister of Mrs. Prescott Hall Butler, whose sons Saint-Gaudens modeled in 1880-81. For the history of the *White* sculpture and the circumstances of its execution, see Thayer Tolles, ed., *American Sculpture in The Metropolitan Museum of Art. Volume 1: A Catalogue of Works by Artists Born by 1865* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1999), 278-80.

⁷⁷ This observation was made by Frances Grimes, one of Saint-Gaudens's studio assistants, and cited in Dryfhout, *The Work of Augustus Saint-Gaudens*, 33.

⁷⁸ *Catalogue of the Sixty-third Annual Exhibition of the National Academy of Design, 1888*, 36, no. 598. The owner is listed as Stanford White. "The Gallery. The National Academy of Design," *Art Amateur* 18 (May 1888): 133, refers to the relief's corner location.

⁷⁹ *New York Evening Post*, 13 April 1888, 4.

⁸⁰ *New York Sun*, 1 April 1888, 16.

⁸¹ *New York Evening Post*, 13 April 1888, 4. For further discussion of the frame, see Tolles, ed., *American Sculpture in The Metropolitan Museum of Art. Volume 1*, 280.

⁸² "Academy of Design. (Second Notice)," *Critic* 9 (14 April 1888): 182. Decorative painting and all sculptures were covered in this review.

⁸³ *Reminiscences*, 1:378.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*; and Royal Cortissoz, *The Life of Whitelaw Reid* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1921), 2:378.

⁸⁵ *Reminiscences*, 1:378, 381.

⁸⁶ Sherman to Lizzie Cameron, 6 March 1888, Nelson A. Miles Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C., box 4.

⁸⁷ *New York Sun*, 1 April 1888, 16; *New York Times*, 31 March 1888, 4. It was not installed in the West Gallery, although it was so stated in the catalogue.

⁸⁸ Burke Wilkinson, *Uncommon Clay: The Life and Works of Augustus Saint-Gaudens* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1985), 182, notes that to Saint-Gaudens's request that Sherman button his collar and straighten his tie, he replied, "[T]he General of the Army of the United States will wear his coat any damn way he pleases."

⁸⁹ [Cook], *Studio*, n.s., 3 (June 1888): 113.

⁹⁰ *New York Times*, 31 March 1888, 4.

⁹¹ This point is raised in *New York Evening Post*, 13 April 1888, 4; *Critic* 9 (7 April 1888): 172; and *New York Sun*, 1 April 1888, 16.

⁹² *Art Amateur* 18 (May 1888): 133.

⁹³ *New York Evening Post*, 13 April 1888, 4.

⁹⁴ *Critic* 9 (7 April 1888): 172.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 171. Saint-Gaudens used this bust as the basis for the general's likeness in his ambitious gilded equestrian monument to General Sherman unveiled in 1903 at Grand Army Plaza, New York.

⁹⁶ Van Rensselaer, *Independent* 40 (19 April 1888): 487. Saint-Gaudens's range of technique also drew comment in *New York Sun*, 1 April 1888, 16.

⁹⁷ Sarah Burns, *Inventing the Modern Artist: Art and Culture in Gilded Age America* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1996), 39-40.

⁹⁸ One exception should be noted: *New York World*, 31 March 1888, 6: "J. S. Hartley's bas relief of Mr. and Mrs. George Inness's children, in the corridor, is appreciative and thoroughly artistic."

⁹⁹ *New York Sun*, 1 April 1888, 16.

¹⁰⁰ *Critic* 9 (14 April 1888): 182; and *New York Times*, 31 March 1888, 4.

¹⁰¹ See, for instance, "Spring at the Academy," *New York Times*, 30 March 1889, 4; and "The National Academy Exhibition: The Portraits and the Sculptures," *New York Sun*, 31 March 1889, 14.

¹⁰² "The Academy of Design: Sixty-fourth Annual Exhibition," *New York Daily Tribune*, 30 March 1889, 6.

¹⁰³ "All for Art's Sake. Brilliant Showing at the National Academy Exhibition," *New York Herald*, 30 March 1889, 10.

¹⁰⁴ *New York Daily Tribune*, 30 March 1889, 6.

¹⁰⁵ "The Fine Arts: The Spring Exhibition at the Academy," *Critic* 11 (6 April 1889): 175.

¹⁰⁶ These bronze busts remain in the collection of the Players' Club. Another bronze cast of Hartley's *Barrett* is illustrated in *The Arts of the American Renaissance*, exh. cat. (New York: Hirschl and Adler Galleries, 1985), 50, no. 28.

¹⁰⁷ Charles M. Kurtz, ed., *National Academy Notes and Complete Catalogue, Sixty-fourth Annual Exhibition, National Academy of Design, New York* (New York: Cassell and Co., 1889), 109. Kurtz's *Notes* were published annually between 1881 and 1889 as illustrated supplements to the official exhibition catalogues. See David B. Dearing, "An Introduction to the History of American Art Criticism to 1925," in Dearing, ed., *Rave Reviews*, 25-26.

¹⁰⁸ *New York Times*, 30 March 1889, 4.

¹⁰⁹ *New York Sun*, 31 March 1889, 14.

¹¹⁰ *New York Daily Tribune*, 30 March 1889, 6.

¹¹¹ *New York Times*, 30 March 1889, 4.

¹¹² For a detailed discussion of the history of the *Stevenson* composition and its many variants, see John H. Dryfhout, "Robert Louis Stevenson," in Jeanne L. Wasserman, ed., *Metamorphoses in Nineteenth-Century Sculpture*, exh. cat. (Cambridge, Mass.: Fogg Art Museum, 1975), 187-200. David B. Dearinger has also assessed criticism of the *Stevenson* relief for the 1889 Academy annual in Dearinger, ed., *Rave Reviews*, 242-44.

¹¹³ Robert Louis Stevenson, "To Will H. Low," in *Underwoods* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1887), 21-23. Low discusses the sittings in *A Chronicle of Friendships, 1873-1900* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1908), 389-95, in a chapter titled "Robert Louis Stevenson and Augustus Saint-Gaudens."

¹¹⁴ *New York Herald*, 30 March 1889, 10. Likewise, "Monthly Record of American Art," *Magazine of Art* 12 (1889): XXI-XXII.

¹¹⁵ "The Academy Exhibition," *New York Evening Post*, 5 April 1889, 9.

¹¹⁶ *New York Sun*, 31 March 1889, 14.

¹¹⁷ *Critic* 11 (6 April 1889): 175.

¹¹⁸ *New York Daily Tribune*, 30 March 1889, 6.

¹¹⁹ *New York Times*, 30 March 1889, 4.

¹²⁰ "The Gallery: The Academy Exhibition," *Art Amateur* 20 (May 1889): 124.

¹²¹ *New York Sun*, 31 March 1889, 14.

¹²² *Ibid.*, and "The Academy Paintings," *New York Times*, 7 April 1889, 5.

¹²³ See, for instance, "The Fine Arts: The Society of American Artists," *Critic* 11 (18 May 1889): 249: "The unity of effect which strikes one upon first entering the rooms is the more surprising when one finds it to be due solely to the maintenance of a pretty high technical standard. There are all *genres*; there are representatives of every modern school of painting."

¹²⁴ "The Society of American Artists," *New York Evening Post*, 15 May 1889, 8.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*

¹²⁶ "Art Notes," *New York Times*, 20 May 1889, 4.

¹²⁷ "Your medallion which those boobies rejected I have here in my studio," Saint-Gaudens to MacMonnies, 21 April 1889, quoted in Mary Smart, *A Flight with Fame: The Life and Art of Frederick MacMonnies (1863-1937)*, catalogue raisonné of sculpture and

checklist of paintings by E. Adina Gordon (Madison, Conn.: Sound View Press, 1996), 82 n. 32.

¹²⁸ January 1933 conversation between Van Rensselaer and Preston Remington, Associate Curator of Decorative Arts, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, notes recorded on object catalogue cards, Department of American Paintings and Sculpture. She also offered a second ostensible reason for modeling the portrait, noting that Saint-Gaudens particularly admired the high ruffled collar of her blouse.

¹²⁹ For further discussion of the Metropolitan's cast, see Tolles, ed., *American Sculpture in The Metropolitan Museum of Art. Volume 1*, 297-300.

¹³⁰ [Jeannette L. Gilder], "The Lounger," *Critic* 11 (19 January 1889): 32. Gilder, the author of this regular column, continued: "I wonder that more people do not have their portraits or those of their friends done in this manner. Perhaps it because they cannot all have St. Gaudens, even if they could afford him." The price of such a relief was quoted as costing \$3000.

¹³¹ "Monthly Record of American Art," *Magazine of Art* 12 (1889): xxx.

¹³² "The Society of Artists," *New York Times*, 12 May 1889, 5; *Magazine of Art* 12 (1889): xxx.

¹³³ *New York Times*, 12 May 1889, 5.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*

¹³⁵ "The Society of American Artists," *Art Amateur* 21 (July 1889): 27.

¹³⁶ *Magazine of Art* 12 (1889): xxx.

¹³⁷ *New York Evening Post*, 15 May 1889, 8.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*

¹³⁹ See, for instance, *Ibid.*; and *New York Times*, 12 May 1889, 5.

¹⁴⁰ Illustrated in Smart, *The Life and Art of Frederick MacMonnies*, 287.

¹⁴¹ *Art Amateur* 21 (July 1889): 27; and *New York Times*, 12 May 1889, 5.

¹⁴² See Thayer Tolles, ed., *American Sculpture in The Metropolitan Museum of Art. Volume II: A Catalogue of Works by Artists Born Between 1865 and 1885* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2001), 470-72.

¹⁴³ Illustrated in Rell G. Francis, *Cyrus E. Dallin: Let Justice Be Done* (Springville, Utah: Springville Museum of Art in cooperation with Utah American Revolution Bicentennial Commission, 1976), 29. The figure was modeled after Dallin returned from Paris.

¹⁴⁴ John Dryfhout and Beverly Cox, *Augustus Saint-Gaudens: The Portrait Reliefs*, exh. cat. (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution for the National Portrait Gallery, 1969), n.p., no. 43, dates the sittings to the summer. However, "American Notes," *Studio*, n.s., 5 (10 May 1890): 233, records that Saint-Gaudens "has completed a beautiful relief of Miss Violet Sargent. . . . It is said to be one of the best bits of work done by St. Gaudens."

¹⁴⁵ Sargent to Saint-Gaudens, undated [Wednesday], Saint-Gaudens Papers, DCL, microfilm reel 12, frames 503-5.

¹⁴⁶ Four preparatory pencil sketches for the *Sargent* relief are illustrated in Dryfhout, *The Work of Augustus Saint-Gaudens*, 183-84. Two are in the collection of the Cooper-Hewitt National Design Museum, Smithsonian Institution, New York, and two were destroyed and are known through archival photographs.

¹⁴⁷ See "Society of American Artists," *New York Times*, 26 April 1891, 5: "of unusual quantity and quality"; and "The Fine Arts: The Society of American Artists," *Critic* 15 (2 May 1891): 243: "excellent." [Untitled], *Decorator and Furnisher* 18 (May 1891): 44, called the modeling of Saint-Gaudens's relief "exquisite" and Dallin's *Awakening of Spring* "a noble piece of work."

¹⁴⁸ [Clarence Cook], "The Society of American Artists of New York. Thirteenth Annual Exhibition," *Studio*, n.s., 6 (2 May 1891): 211-14.

¹⁴⁹ "Monthly Record of American Art. The Society's Exhibition, New York," *Magazine of Art* 14 (June 1891): XXV; and "Splendid Art Show by the Society," *New York Herald*, 25 April 1891, 6.

¹⁵⁰ Malcolm Bell, "The Society of American Artists," *Art Amateur* 25 (June 1891): 6.

¹⁵¹ *Magazine of Art* 14 (June 1891): XXV.

¹⁵² "Some Questions of Art. The Society of American Artists, First Notice," *New York Sun*, 4 May 1891, 6.

¹⁵³ See, for instance, *Magazine of Art* 14 (June 1891): XXVII, which found Warner "never worse represented."

¹⁵⁴ The most incisive assessment of this piece was written by [Cook], *Studio*, n.s., 6 (2 May 1891): 213, in which he observes "in Mr. Adams' hand the movement of the chisel is like that of the brush, and makes us think of painting, and of a very beautiful and sympathetic kind of painting too."

¹⁵⁵ *Society of American Artists Thirteenth Exhibition 1891* (New York, 1891), 33, nos. 145-47.

¹⁵⁶ *Trustees of the Museum of Fine Arts Sixteenth Annual Report for the Year Ending Dec. 31, 1891* (Boston: Alfred Mudge & Son, 1892), 7. The Society of American Artists' submissions are listed in "Contributions to the Loan Exhibitions. For the Year 1891," 50-65.

¹⁵⁷ There are six reviews for this exhibition in the newspaper clippings scrapbook, vol. 2, (1887-99), Archives, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. Three do not mention sculpture (*Boston Herald*, June 7 and 14; and *Boston Evening Transcript*, June 4).

¹⁵⁸ "American Artists at the Museum," *Boston Post*, 16 June 1891, 4; and "The Fine Arts: Landscapes in the Exhibition of the Society of American Artists—Second Notice," *Boston Evening Transcript*, 5 June 1891, 2.

¹⁵⁹ *Sixteenth Annual Exhibition of the Society of American Artists* (New York, 1894), illus. nos. 2 (Saint-Gaudens) and 13 (Adams).

¹⁶⁰ "Society of American Artists: A Further Consideration of the Works of Some American Painters," *New York Sun*, 18 March 1894, sec. 2, p. 3.

¹⁶¹ "A Brilliant Exhibition: The Society of American Artists," *New York Daily Tribune*, 3 December 1892, 6.

¹⁶² See, for instance, Montague Marks, "My Note Book," *Art Amateur* 28 (January 1893): 42.

¹⁶³ The six later exhibited at the World's Columbian Exposition were Adams's portrait of his wife; French's bust of Amos Bronson Alcott (1889-90; Museum of Fine Arts, Boston) and his *Death Staying the Hand of the Sculptor*; Hartley's busts of John Gilbert as Sir Peter Teazle (1889; Players Club, New York) and Colonel William Conant Church (1890; private collection); and Warner's portrait of Weir.

¹⁶⁴ The exception in the case of St. Gaudens's *Piping Pan* was "The Fine Arts: Retrospective Exhibition of the Society of American Artists," *Critic* 18 (10 December 1892): 333, which rhapsodized about the sculpture at length, finding "nothing more living, unhackneyed and inspiring in the exhibition."

¹⁶⁵ "Monthly Record of American Art," *Magazine of Art* 16 (1893): v.

¹⁶⁶ French to William M. R. French, 3 February 1893, Daniel Chester French Family Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, microfilm reel 41, frame 252; and

French to Pamela Prentiss French, 21 December 1892, French Family Papers, microfilm reel 39, frame 569. He enclosed a clipping of the article with the letter.

¹⁶⁷ M. G. Van Rensselaer, "Current Questions of Art," *New York World*, 18 December 1892, 24.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid.

¹⁷⁰ "Reminiscences of an Idiot," Saint-Gaudens Papers, DCL, microfilm reel 36, frame 585.

¹⁷¹ Saint-Gaudens to Beaman, 10 January 1891 (copy), Saint-Gaudens Papers, DCL, microfilm reel 1, frame 529.

¹⁷² "Society of American Artists: First Notice," *New York Evening Post*, 4 May 1892, 7.

¹⁷³ Charles Moore, *The Life and Times of Charles McKim* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1929), 119.

¹⁷⁴ For a concise explanation of Saint-Gaudens's involvement with the fair preparations, see Pamela Potter-Hennessey, "The Sculpture at the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition: International Encounters and Jingoistic Spectacles" (Ph.D. diss, University of Maryland, College Park, 1995), 160-64.

¹⁷⁵ See Thayer Tolles, "'A Bit of Artistic Idealism': Augustus Saint-Gaudens's *World's Columbian Exposition Commemorative Presentation Medal*," in Alan M. Stahl, ed., *The Medal in America, Volume 2: Coinage of the Americas Conference Proceedings* (New York: American Numismatic Society, 1999), 136-56.

¹⁷⁶ On the founding, see Michele Bogart, *Public Sculpture and the Civic Ideal in New York City, 1890-1930* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1989), 47-55; and David Dearing, "The National Sculpture Society: A History of Its Early Years," *Sculpture Review* 42, no. 3 (1993): 22-29.

¹⁷⁷ The Sculpture Society's first exhibition was held in 1893, in conjunction with the Architectural League's annual, and its first independent show was in 1895.

¹⁷⁸ Bogart, *Public Sculpture and the Civic Ideal in New York City*, 49.

¹⁷⁹ For instance, in 1886, Bion wrote Saint-Gaudens, "New York is far from Luxembourg and the Monceau park. . . . Couldn't you send a little scrap to the next salon, so that you could get back into circulation? If you have some medallions or some kind of small piece that would be easy to send which could draw attention to your name. Then you could

later, when you come, have a foot in the door, having already made a kind of presentation.” Bion to Saint-Gaudens, 20 July 1886, original letter, Saint-Gaudens Papers, DCL; English translation, Saint-Gaudens National Historic Site, Cornish, New Hampshire. Saint-Gaudens did not allow Bion to submit work to a Salon on his behalf until 1894 when he displayed the models for his *World's Columbian Exposition Commemorative Presentation Medal*.

¹⁸⁰ Bion to Saint-Gaudens, 21 May 1895, Saint-Gaudens Papers, DCL; English translation, Saint-Gaudens National Historic Site.

¹⁸¹ Bion to Saint-Gaudens, 29 August 1896, Saint-Gaudens Papers, DCL; English translation, Saint-Gaudens National Historic Site.

Conclusion

The seeds of a shift toward a second phase in Saint-Gaudens's relationship with the art press were sown during the early- to mid-1890s, the logical terminus of this dissertation. The dedication of the sculptor's *Robert Gould Shaw Memorial* in 1897 followed by his three-year tenure in Paris (1897-1900) represents a significant marker in his critical reputation, just as the unveiling of the *Farragut Monument* did in 1881. While Saint-Gaudens's early and most loyal supporters—Richard Watson Gilder, Charles de Kay, Mariana Griswold Van Rensselaer, and Kenyon Cox—continued to advocate on the sculptor's behalf until and beyond his death in August 1907, several developments diluted their primacy of their message. First, Saint-Gaudens's own ambitions and aspirations broadened behind the creation and bolstering of a national art, as he looked to Europe to earn critical esteem and to be measured globally against his contemporaries. The exhibition of his work at the Paris Salons in the late 1890s and especially at the Exposition Universelle of 1900 led prominent French writers such as Léonce Bénédict and Gaston Migneon to reinterpret Saint-Gaudens's standing from an international perspective.¹ Second, Saint-Gaudens's reputation as a sculptor and a figurehead became larger than his inner circle could continue to comfortably orchestrate. For instance, his supporters were unsuccessful in their attempts to moderate two notable controversies surrounding the issue of nudity in Saint-Gaudens's work in the 1890s—the reverse for the *World's Columbian Exposition Commemorative Presentation Medal* (1892-94) and his overlifesize *Diana* (1892-93) for Madison Square Garden.²

Moreover, by the late 1890s, Saint-Gaudens's critical base of support had shifted. At first championed by a group of avant-garde writers, by the end of the nineteenth century Saint-Gaudens and his work began to hold appeal for more conservative taste. A second generation of American writers and historians embraced him in a proliferation of monographic articles, evaluating Saint-Gaudens and his work through the lens of established master, rather than freshly discovered promising talent. Of these new voices, Charles Caffin and Royal Cortissoz were foremost advocates for the sculptor.³ By the turn of the twentieth century, the currency of Saint-Gaudens's name primarily rested on several of his most successful monuments to the marginalization of the smaller portraits, although they were passingly admired. Even by 1897, a *Century Magazine* editorial noted a lack of familiarity with the artist's overall oeuvre: "Perhaps no living artist has so high a reputation as St. Gaudens . . . with so little of his work familiar to the general public." Citing the early achievements of his bas-reliefs, busts, decorative work, the author—probably Gilder—noted that his monuments "give still wider public proof of a genius the evidences of which have been fully known and appreciated by the artists and critics for many years."⁴ Yet, to later writers, Saint-Gaudens's public monuments predominantly stood as exemplars of an idealized conservative Gilded Age in stark contrast to advancing modernism. Instead of being held up as progressive, as the early bas-reliefs were, after the turn of the century Saint-Gaudens and his work served as a different, more traditional role model for his writers.

At the beginning of his career in 1875, as a young sculptor returned from Rome, Saint-Gaudens was a struggling artist almost unknown in the burgeoning and competitive art circles of New York. To a degree of success arguably unmatched by any other

American artist of his era, Saint-Gaudens during the 1870s and 1880s deliberately fostered and honed a network of critical advocates who advanced and maintained his professional status, often to degrees of boosterism and hyperbole. That these individuals expedited his reputation in tandem with their own agendas for a national art was recognized even during his lifetime. The artist and writer Lorado Taft, in his comprehensive *History of American Sculpture* of 1903, referred to Gilder's article on the *Farragut Monument* in the June 1881 issue of the elite *Scribner's Monthly* "as an article which deserves to become historic because of its sympathetic comprehension and its bold claims for the newly discovered master." Indeed, of the earliest assessments of Saint-Gaudens, this article stands out for engaging issues of ongoing critical interest, among them the role of public monument in American life and the positioning of the American artist in a grand artistic tradition. Taft continued: "Time has justified these claims; but who can say how long a period might have been required had not the modest sculptor found such champions to vouch for him and for his unfamiliar art."⁵ The interdependent agenda of the artist and his writers to promote a national school of artists is in large measure the reason for what was a win-win situation for both parties. Messianic belief in Saint-Gaudens's talent, the desirable pedigree of French Beaux-Arts training, and the infectious charisma of a "modest" man were also contributing factors.

Saint-Gaudens's most steady advocates were among a genteel segment of upper-middle class New Yorkers who believed that culture served as a means to inoculate against the encroaching ills of post-Civil War society. Although the sculptor's immigrant roots were far from their own patrician backgrounds, his innate talent (to his advocates, inborn "genius") and his tenacious networking earned him the leading role as "the"

American sculptor of promise. Saint-Gaudens came upon the scene almost a decade after critics began writing about a new overarching agenda—defining the parameters for a new school of American artists, cosmopolitan in spirit and training, yet American in subject and values. Once he asserted himself as a gifted artist in sympathy with their viewpoint, he became their sculptor-of-choice to democratically exemplify these ideals. Thus ensued, especially in the tumultuous late 1870s and early 1880s—propagandistic writings by the Gilder circle—in the form of well-timed puffs, unilaterally positive exhibition reviews, and articles carefully crafted in collaboration with Saint-Gaudens. These writers rarely found fault with the sculptor's work, and other critics in the New York and national press, with rare exception, dutifully followed suit.

Because the development and professionalization of nineteenth-century American art criticism is closely affiliated with institutional and organizational histories, Saint-Gaudens's participation in annual art exhibitions must be accounted for when assessing his lifetime reputation. Saint-Gaudens's circle of writers were tied directly to the founding of the Society of American Artists in 1877, and the early exhibitions of this organization provided rich fodder for spirited critical discourse about issues of technique, nationalism, and subjectivity versus objectivity. Saint-Gaudens's sketchy bas-reliefs of artist-friends were promoted by his advocates as innovative and paved the way for wider acceptance of this sculptural aesthetic. Throughout the 1870s and 1880s, critical descriptions of Saint-Gaudens's sculpture mirrored overall aesthetic developments in American sculpture, further evidence that he was the stylistic trendsetter. The innovative bas-reliefs and busts, as much as the monuments, were seminal in establishing his reputation and advancing the concept of a national school of sculpture. As the journal

American Art Illustrated observed in 1888: "It is impossible to question the genius of Augustus St. Gaudens, or doubt that he has really introduced a new style in sculpture. This was first apparent in the bas-reliefs. . . . The busts of President Woolsey, of Yale, and Senator Evarts were much remarked."⁶

By the mid-1880s, as Saint-Gaudens's career escalated and his character-projecting portraits became more decorative, the New York press routinely accepted his work as superior. Critical dialogue in general tempered in tone and frequency as the work of Paris- and Munich-trained new movement artists became the prevailing norm. At the same time, as Saint-Gaudens's standing grew to national proportions, especially after the 1887 unveiling of the *Standing Lincoln* in Chicago, he relied less frequently on exhibition venues, his small works, and the response they engendered for his professional advancement. Saint-Gaudens's commitment to simultaneous long-term monumental projects also contributed to this shift. As a result, his pattern of exhibiting his smaller portraits became irregular, and the critical spotlight on sculpture at regular art venues shifted from Saint-Gaudens in particular to a second generation of native-based American talent spawned in Parisian academies and ateliers.

If art is a reflection of life, Saint-Gaudens's best sculptures embody this tenet. Created during a period of tremendous societal transformation, these works are witness to his own creativity, perseverance, and ability to penetrate and project human character. Saint-Gaudens and his circle of critics and fellow artists also saw art as means to improve life and foster communication, either in direct contact with the object or mediated through the writings of the press.

Endnotes to the Conclusion

¹ See, for instance, Gaston Migneon, "Le Sculpteur Augustin Saint-Gaudens," *Art et Décoration* 5 (February 1899): 43-49, a survey of the sculptor's work. For a discussion of Saint-Gaudens and French critics in the late 1890s, see Édouard Papet, "Saint-Gaudens and France: Influences and Reception: A Portrait of the Artist as a Child Prodigy," in *Augustus Saint-Gaudens, 1848-1907: A Master of American Sculpture*, exh. cat. (Paris: Somogy Éditions d'Art, 1999), 26-27.

² See Thayer Tolles, "'A Bit of Artistic Idealism': Augustus Saint-Gaudens's *World's Columbian Exposition Commemorative Presentation Medal*," in Alan M. Stahl, ed., *The Medal in America, Volume 2: Coinage of the Americas Conference Proceedings* (New York: American Numismatic Society, 1999), 136-56; and Jennifer Marie Hardin, "The Nude in the Era of the New Movement in American Art, Thomas Eakins, Kenyon Cox, and Augustus Saint-Gaudens" (Ph.D. diss., Princeton University, 2000), 266-347.

³ Caffin served as art critic for the *New York Evening Post* (1897-1900) and the *New York Sun* (1901-1904) in addition to writing for *Harper's Weekly* (1897-1901) and the American supplement of *International Studio* (1901-1905). See Charles H. Caffin, *American Masters of Sculpture: Being Brief Appreciations of Some American Sculptors and of Some Phases of Sculpture in America* (New York: Doubleday, Page, and Co., 1903), 3-17; Caffin, "Augustus Saint-Gaudens: An Appreciation," *Putnam's Monthly* 3 (November 1907): 205-10; Caffin, "Saint-Gaudens: An American Genius," *Harper's Weekly* 51 (24 August 1907): 1234-36, 1247; and Caffin, "The Work of the Sculptor Augustus Saint-Gaudens," *World's Work* 7 (February 1904): 4403-19. Cortisoz joined the staff of the *New York Tribune* in 1891 and held the position of art critic for fifty-three years. See Royal Cortisoz, *Augustus Saint-Gaudens* (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin, 1907); Cortisoz, "Augustus Saint-Gaudens," *North American Review* 177 (November 1903): 725-38; Cortisoz, "Augustus Saint-Gaudens," *Outlook* 84 (22 September 1906): 199-208; and Cortisoz, "The Influence of Saint-Gaudens" *Proceedings of the American Academy of Arts and Letters* 1 (1 November 1911): 5-8.

⁴ [Richard Watson Gilder], "Topics of the Time: The Sculptor," *Century Magazine* 54 (June 1897): 314.

⁵ Lorado Taft, *The History of American Sculpture* (New York and London: Macmillan, 1903), 288, 291.

⁶ "Miscellaneous Topics: Augustus St. Gaudens," *American Art Illustrated* 2 (March 1888): 35.

Appendix

American Exhibitions in which Saint-Gaudens Participated (1875-1894)

1875

50th Annual Exhibition, National Academy of Design, New York, April 8-May 29

513. <i>Bust of the Hon. W. M. Evarts</i>	Hon. W. M. Evarts
515. <i>Bust of the Hon. E. W. Stoughton</i>	Hon. E. W. Stoughton

1876

Centennial International Exhibition, Philadelphia, May 10-November 10

1216. *Bust of Hon. William Evarts*

1879

2nd Exhibition, Society of American Artists, New York, March 10-29

158. *Three Bronze Portrait Medallions*
159. *Three Bronze Portrait Medallions*

50th Annual Exhibition, Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, Philadelphia,
April 28-June 2

327. *Three artist friends (small bronze reliefs)*
328. *Three Bronze Portrait Medallions*

1880

3rd Exhibition, Society of American Artists, New York, March 17-April 16

152. *Marble Bust of Theodore Dwight Woolsey, D.D., LL.D.*

Exhibition of Works by Living American Artists, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston,
November 9-December 20

1. *Bust of President Woolsey, in marble* Yale College
2. *Bronze Medallion, Dr. Henry Shiff, Paris, 1878*
3. *Bronze Medallion, Mr. Frank Millet, Paris, 1878*
4. *Bronze Medallion, Bastien-Lepage, Paris, 1880*
5. *Bronze Medallion, Rodman De Kay Gilder, Paris, 1879*

1881

4th Annual Exhibition, Society of American Artists, New York, March 28-April 29

- 107. *Portrait of Two Boys*
- 109. *Rodman De Kay Gilder*
- 110. *Portrait*
- 112. *Portrait of Doctor Henry Schiff*
- 113. *J. Bastien-Lepage, engraved by Fred. Juengling*
- 135. *J. Bastien-Lepage* Boston Art Museum

9th Annual Exhibition, Inter-State Industrial Exposition, Chicago, September 7-October 22

- 76. *Bronze Medallion Portraits of Lawrence Smith
Butler and Chas. Stewart Butler*
- 77. *Bronze Medallion Portrait of Wm. L. Picknell*
- 78. *Bronze Medallion Portrait of Geo. W. Maynard*
- 79. *Bronze Medallion Portrait of Bastien LePage* \$200
- 80. *Plaster Cast of a Lady*
- 552. *Bronze Medallion Portrait of Wm. L. Picknell*
Lent by Mr. Thomas Hovenden

1882

5th Exhibition, Society of American Artists, New York, opened April 6, supplement opened May 1

- 92. *Portrait of a Child* Dr. Schiff
- 93. *Panel* Cornelius Vanderbilt
- 94. *Portrait* S. G. Ward

10th Annual Exhibition, Inter-State Industrial Exposition, Chicago, September 6-October 1

- 302. *Portrait—Mr. Samuel Gray Ward*
- 303. *Portrait—Miss Gertrude Vanderbilt*
- 304. *Portrait—Master Homer Schiff Saint Gaudens*

1883

4th Annual Exhibition of Contemporary American Art, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, October 16-November 27

- 221. *Medallion Portrait of Mr. S.G. Ward*
- 235. *Medallion Portrait of W. L. Picknell. (In bronze.)* W. L. Picknell

1884

Calumet Club, New York, ca. June

Bronze reliefs of children

1885

5th Annual Exhibition of Contemporary American Art, Museum of Fine Arts,
Boston, May 5-June 2201. *Portrait of Prof. Asa Gray, Cambridge. Relief in bronze.* Harvard
College56th Annual Exhibition, Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, Philadelphia,
October 29-December 10645. *Bas relief of S. Weir Mitchell, M.D., in bronze* Dr. Mitchell

1886

8th Exhibition, Society of American Artists, New York, May 5-October 1593. *Bas-relief Portraits* Original, in bronze, owned by Jacob H. Schiff

1887

3rd Annual Exhibition, Architectural League of New York, December 19-January 7,
1888417. *H. W. Bellows relief*439. *Unidentified bas-relief (plaster)*

1888

63rd Annual Exhibition, National Academy of Design, New York, April 2-May 12597. *Bust of General Sherman*598. *Portrait, Medallion* Stanford White16th Annual Exhibition, Inter-State Industrial Exposition, Chicago, September 5-
October 20346. *Bust of General Sherman*

1889

64th Annual Exhibition, National Academy of Design, New York, April 1-May 11

495. *Portrait, Medallion of Robert Louis Stevenson*

11th Exhibition, Society of American Artists, New York, May 13-June 15

135. *Portrait in Low Relief—Bronze* Mrs. Schuyler Van Rensselaer

17th Annual Exhibition, Inter-State Industrial Exposition, Chicago, September 4-October 19

403. *Medallion Portrait of Robert Louis Stevenson, Esq.*

404. *Bronze Medallion Portrait of William M. Chase, Esq.*

1890

2nd Special Exhibition, Art Club of Philadelphia, November 3-December 7

160. *Bust of General Wm. T. Sherman*
Robert Louis Stevenson

18th Annual Exhibition, Inter-State Industrial Exposition, Chicago, September 3-October 18

285. *Jules Bastien-LePage (Bronze Bas-relief)* [lent by Sara Hallowell]

1891

13th Exhibition, Society of American Artists, New York, April 27-May 23

198. *Portrait of Miss Violet Sargent—Bas Relief—Plaster* John S. Sargent

Exhibition of the Society of American Artists, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston,
June 4-July 5

167. *Violet Sargent* John S. Sargent

7th Annual Exhibition, Architectural League of New York, December 24-January 9,
1892

505. *Bessie Smith White*

1892

Retrospective Exhibition, Society of American Artists, New York, December 5-25

271. *Portrait of General Sherman--Bust, Plaster*

272. *Portrait of Bastien LePage--Bas-Relief, Bronze*

273. *Portrait of a Child--Bas Relief, Bronze*

1894

16th Annual Exhibition, Society of American Artists, New York, March 12-April 14

311. *Portrait--Bas-Relief, Marble* John S. Sargent

Portraits of Women: Loan Exhibition for the Benefit of St. John's Guild and the
Orthopaedic Hospital, National Academy of Design, New York, November
1-December 1

253. *Mrs. Schuyler Van Rensselaer, Bronze Relief* Mrs. George Griswold

254. *Portrait Medallion. Marble Relief* Stanford White



Figure 1: Engraving after Augustus Saint-Gaudens's drawing of *Faith* by Paul Dubois, published in Russell Sturgis, "The Fine Arts at the Paris Exposition," *Scribner's Monthly* 18 (June 1879): 173.

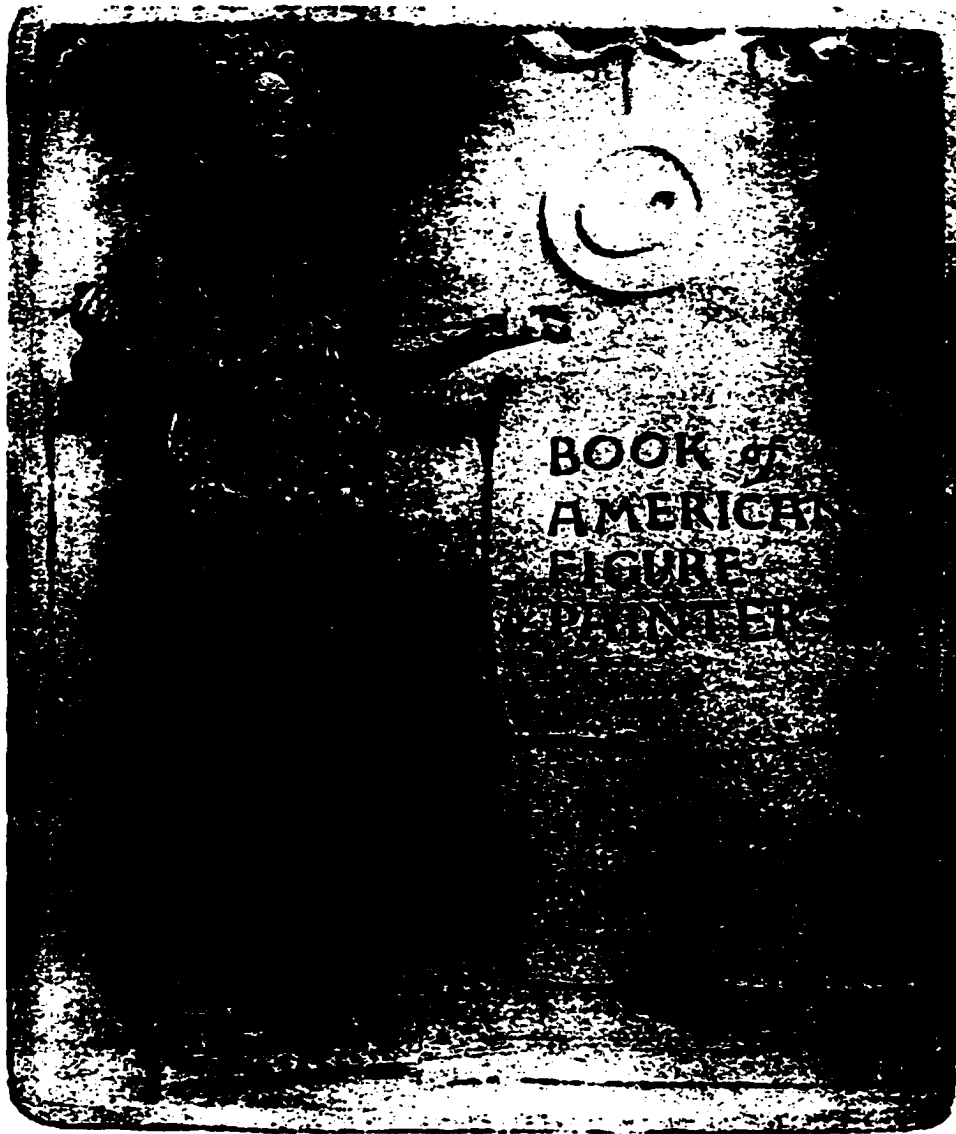


Figure 2: Reproduction after central *Morgan Tomb* angel by Augustus Saint Gaudens, published in Mariana Griswold Van Rensselaer, *Book of American Figure Painters* (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Company, 1886), title page.



Figure 3: 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.



Figure 4: Augustus Saint-Gaudens, *Kenyon Cox*, 1889, bronze, 10 1/4 x 8 3/8 in., National Portrait Gallery, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C., Bequest of Allyn Cox, 1983.

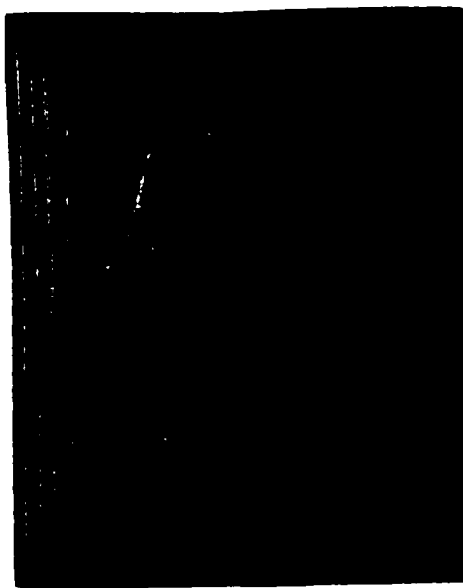


Figure 5: Augustus Saint-Gaudens, *William Ralston Balch*, 1878, bronze, 7 5/8 x 5 3/8 in., private collection, San Francisco.



Figure 6: Augustus Saint-Gaudens, *Mildred and William Dean Howells*, 1897, bronze, 8 1/4 x 13 1/4 in., National Portrait Gallery, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C., Gift of Miss Mildred D. Howells, 1949.



Figure 7: Augustus Saint-Gaudens, *Josiah Gilbert Holland*, 1881, bronze, 15 5/8 x 11 1/8 in., Springfield Cemetery, Springfield, Massachusetts.

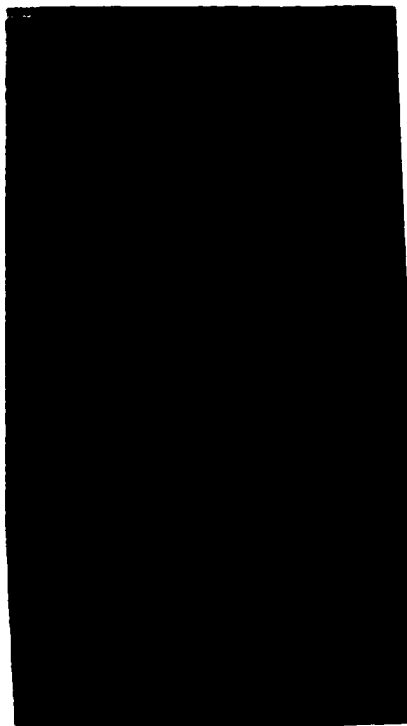


Figure 8: Augustus Saint-Gaudens, *Charles A. Dana*, 1899, 37 3/8 x 19 3/8 in., bronze, unlocated; archival photograph.

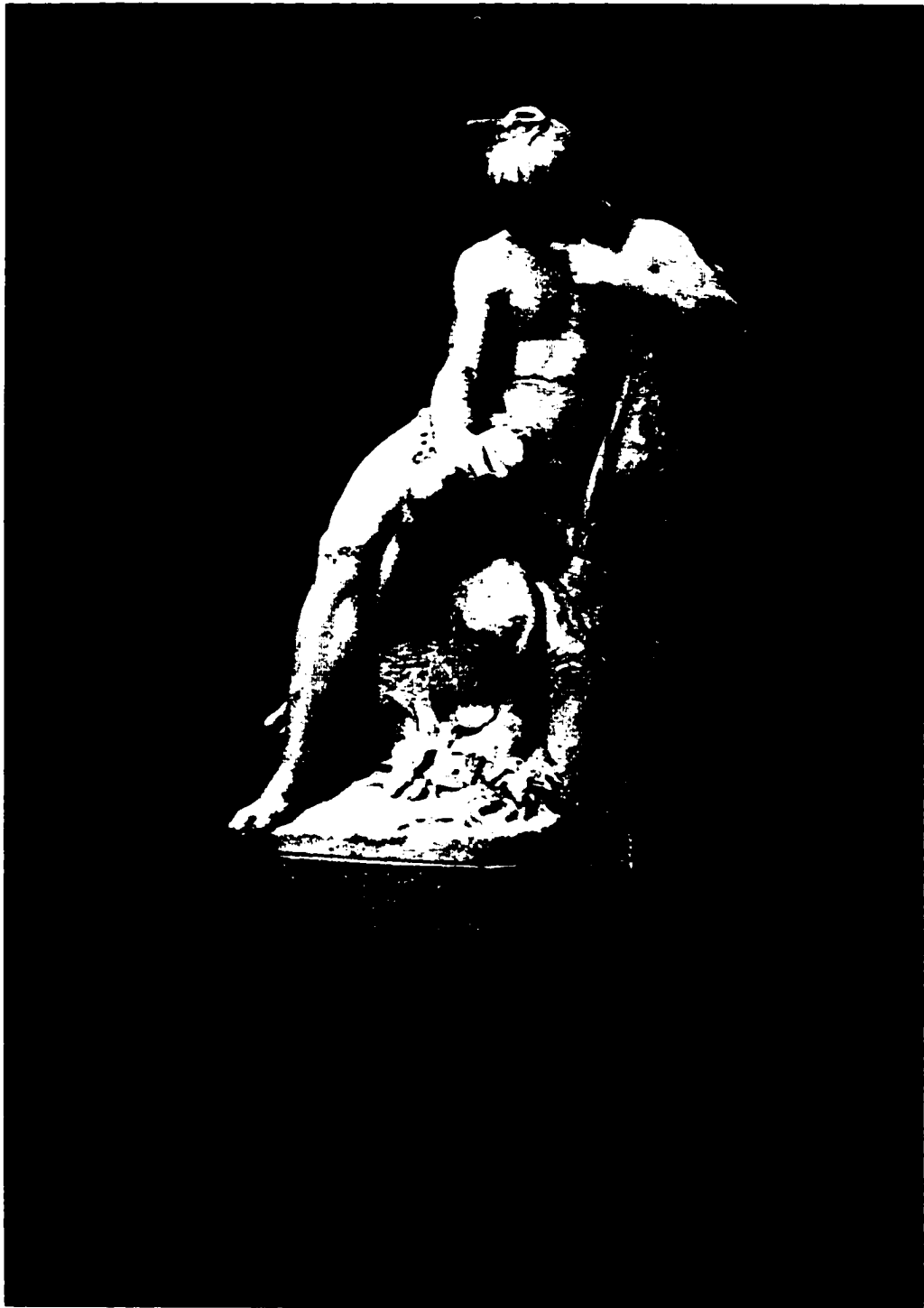


Figure 9: Augustus Saint-Gaudens, *Hiawatha*, 1871-72; this carving, 1874, marble, 93 x 34 1/2 x 37 1/4 in., The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Gift of Diane, Daniel, and Mathew Wolf, in memory of Catherine Hoover Voorsanger, 2001.

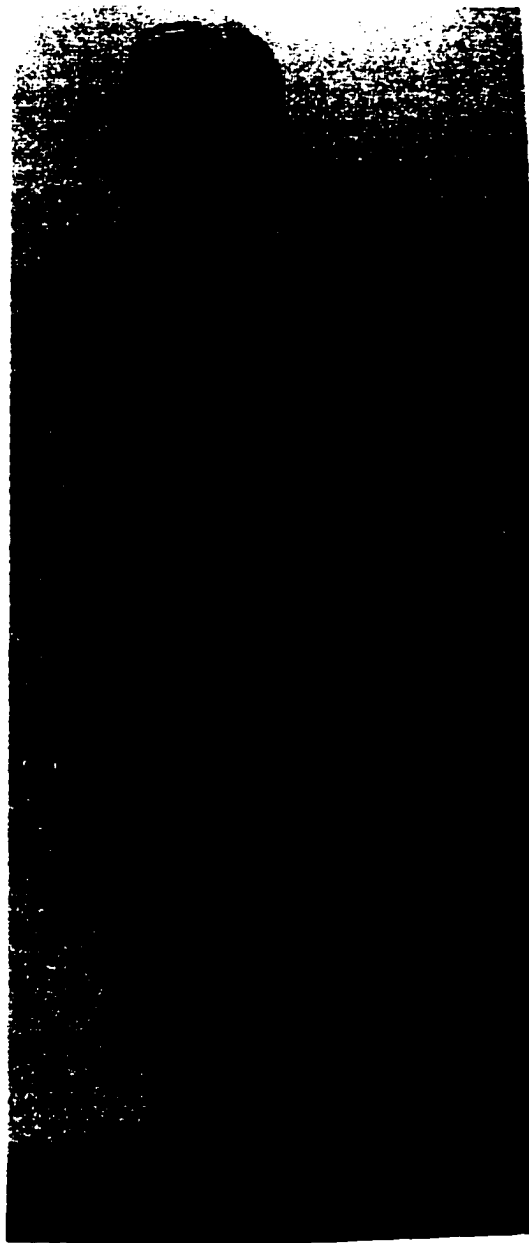


Figure 10: Augustus Saint-Gaudens, *Silence*, 1874-76, marble, 88 in. H., Daniel D. Tompkins Memorial Chapel, Masonic Home, Utica, New York.

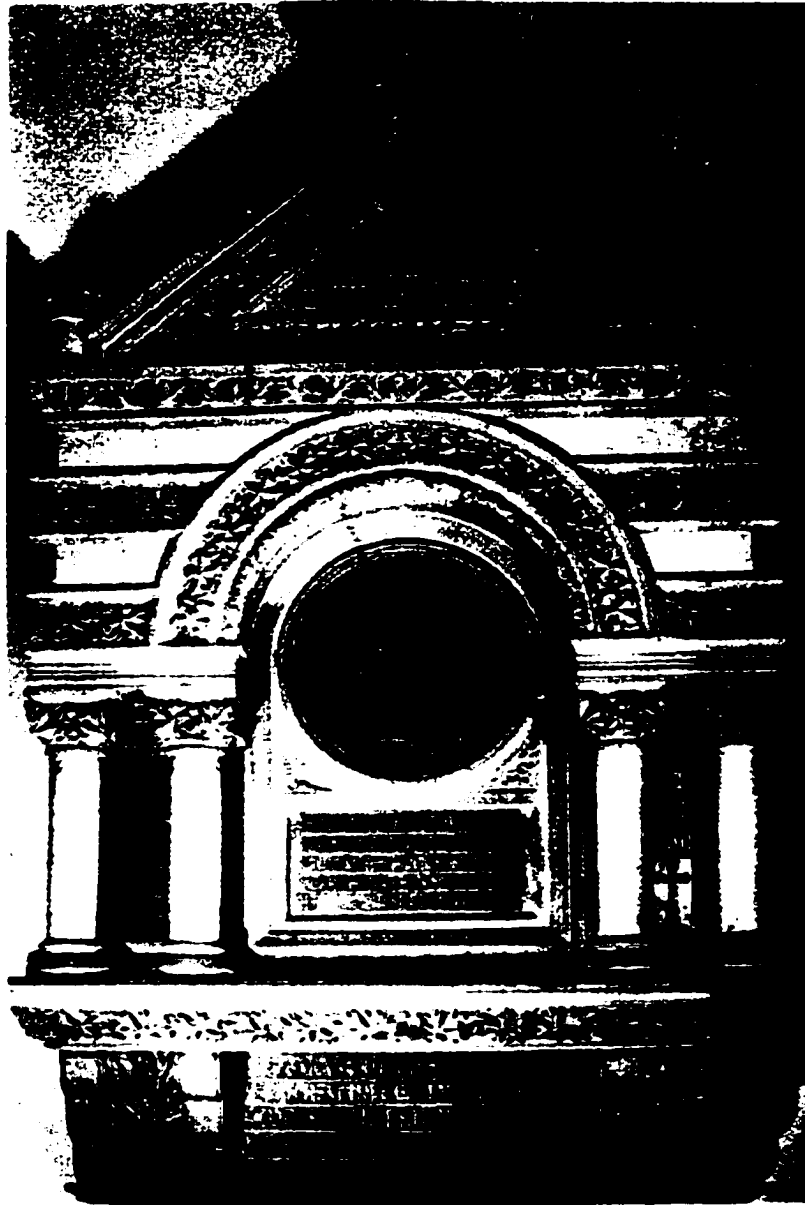


Figure 11: Augustus Saint-Gaudens, *Henry Eglinton Montgomery Memorial*, 1876-77, bronze, 32 in. Diam., Church of the Incarnation, New York.



Figure 12: Augustus Saint-Gaudens and John La Farge, *Edward King Family Tomb*, 1877-78, limestone, 154 in. H., Island Cemetery, Newport, Rhode Island.

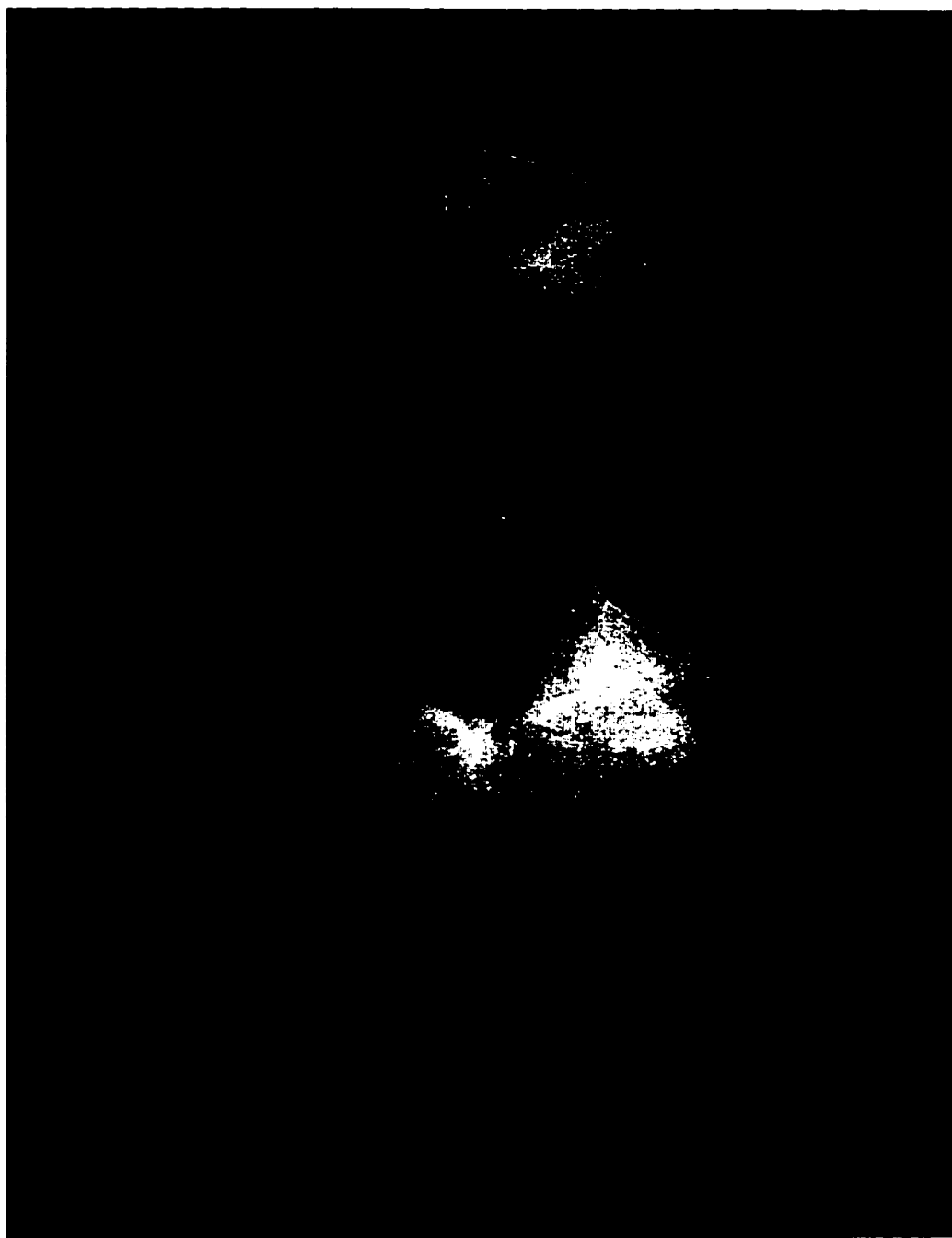


Figure 13: Augustus Saint-Gaudens, *William Maxwell Evarts*, 1872-73; this carving, 1874, marble, 22 7/8 x 12 3/4 x 9 1/4 in., The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Gift of Erving and Joyce Wolf, 1987.

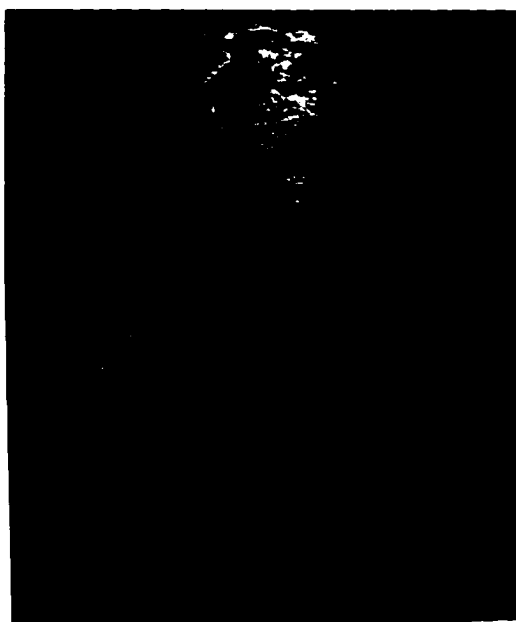


Figure 14: Augustus Saint Gaudens, *Edwin Wallace Stoughton*, 1872-73, marble, 26 1/2 x 22 x 14 1/2 in., John and Mable Ringling Museum of Art, Sarasota, Florida, Bequest of John Ringling, 1936.



Figure 15: William O'Donovan, *Thomas LeClear*, 1876, plaster, 18 x 14 x 11 1/2 in., Smithsonian American Art Museum, Washington, D.C., Museum Acquisition.

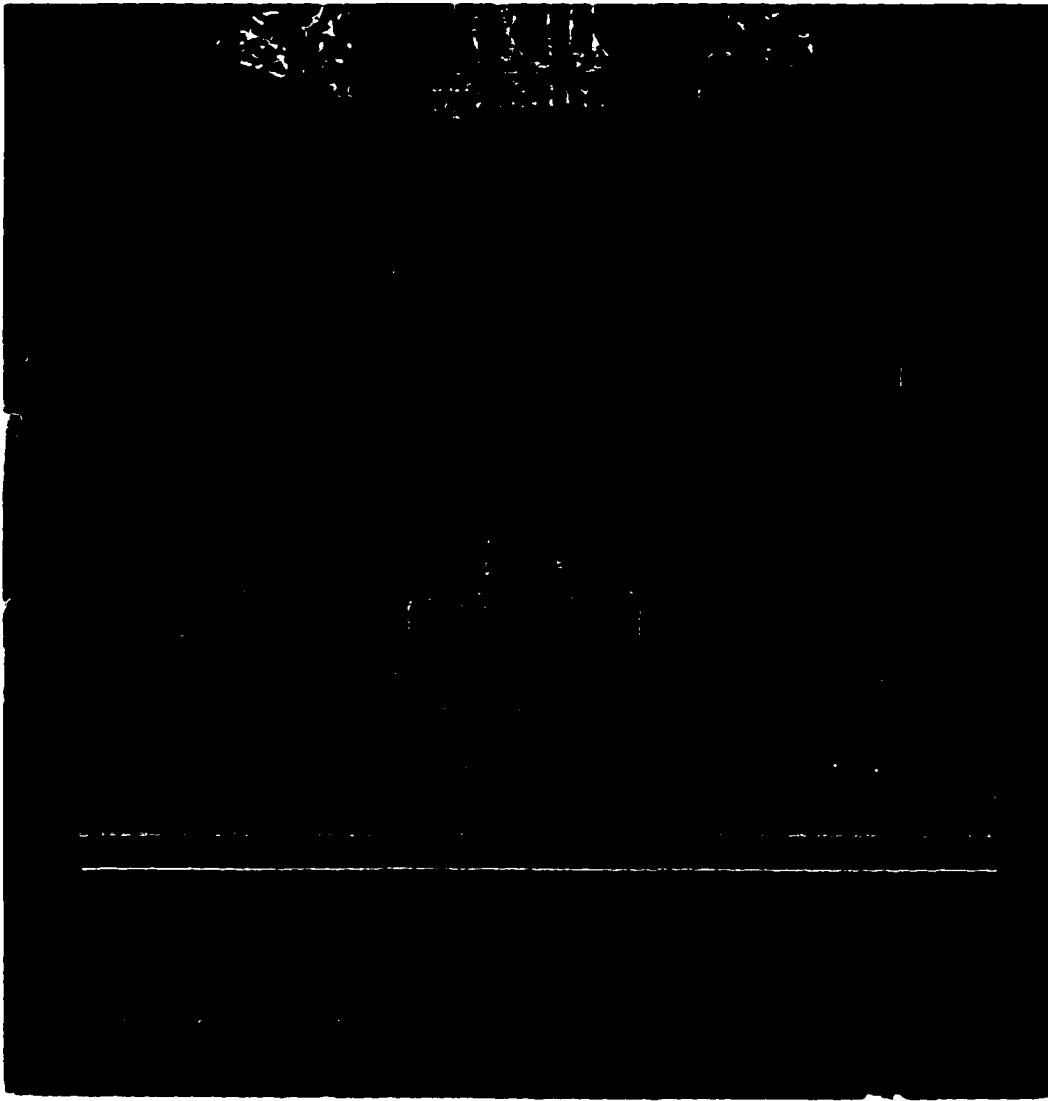


Figure 16: Augustus Saint-Gaudens, *Adoration of the Cross by Angels and Cherubs*, 1877, composition material, paint, Saint Thomas Church, New York, destroyed by fire, 1905; archival photograph, Upjohn Collection, Avery Architectural and Fine Arts Library, Columbia University, New York.



"ADAPTATION OF THE CROSS OF ANGELA."—PANEL IN THE CHANCEL OF ST. THOMAS'S CHURCH, NEW YORK CITY
 DESIGNED IN HIGH RELIEF BY AUGUSTUS ST. GAUDENS. THE ENGRAVING BY T. COLE, AFTER PHOTOGRAPH.

Figure 17: Timothy Cole, engraving of Saint Thomas Church reredos by Augustus Saint-Gaudens, published in [Clarence Cook], "Recent Church Decoration," *Scribner's Monthly* 15 (February 1878): 576.

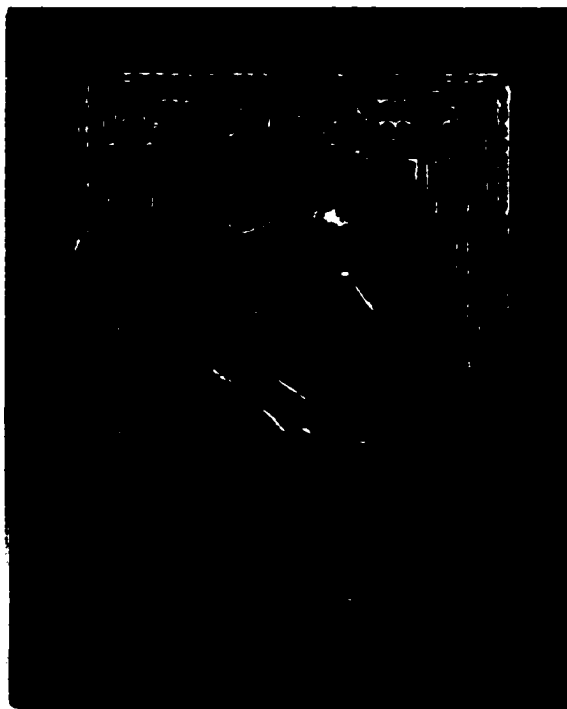


Figure 18: Augustus Saint-Gaudens, *David Maitland Armstrong*, 1877, bronze, 7 7/8 x 4 9/16 in., private collection.



Figure 19: Howard Roberts, *Lot's Wife Turning to Salt*, 1876-77, marble, 40 in. H., private collection.



Figure 20: Olin Levi Warner, *Daniel Cottier*, 1878, bronze, 11 1/4 in. H., private collection.



Figure 21: William O'Donovan, *William Page*, 1877, bronze, 24 3/4 x 14 x 10 1/2 in., National Academy of Design, New York, Gift of Friends of Mr. Page.

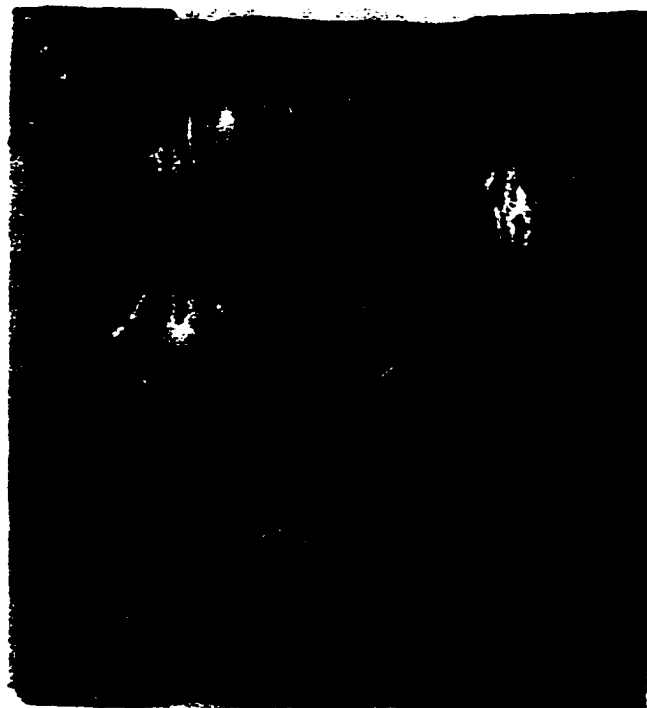


Figure 22: Augustus Saint-Gaudens, *Helen Maitland Armstrong*, 1878, bronze, 6 1/4 x 5 1/2 in., private collection.



Figure 23: Augustus Saint-Gaudens, *Dr. Walter Cary*, 1878, bronze, 9 3/16 x 6 9/16 in., private collection.

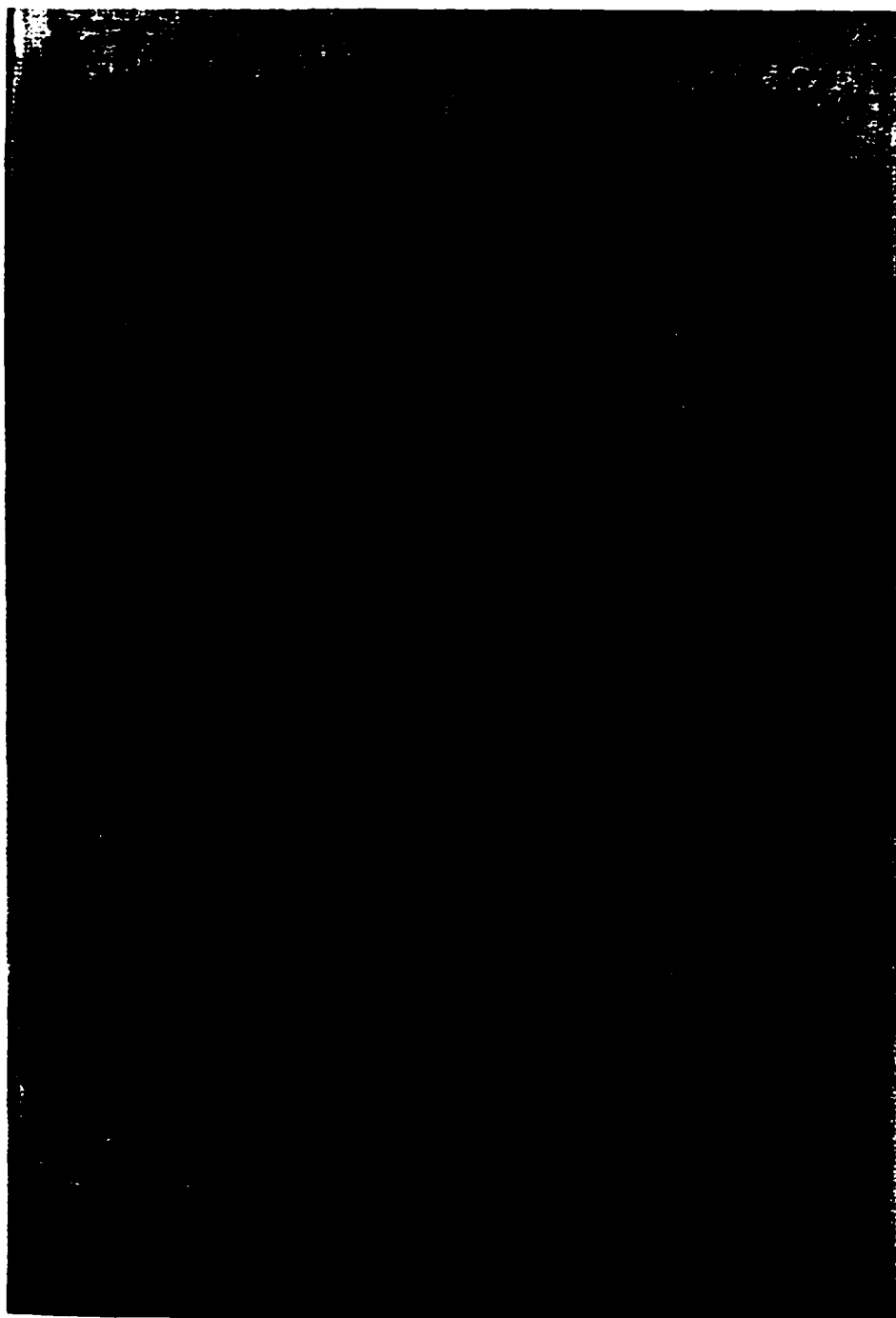


Figure 24: Augustus Saint-Gaudens, *Emelia Ward Chapin*, 1879, plaster, 9 1/2 x 6 in., U.S. Department of Interior, National Park Service, Saint-Gaudens National Historic Site, Cornish, New Hampshire.

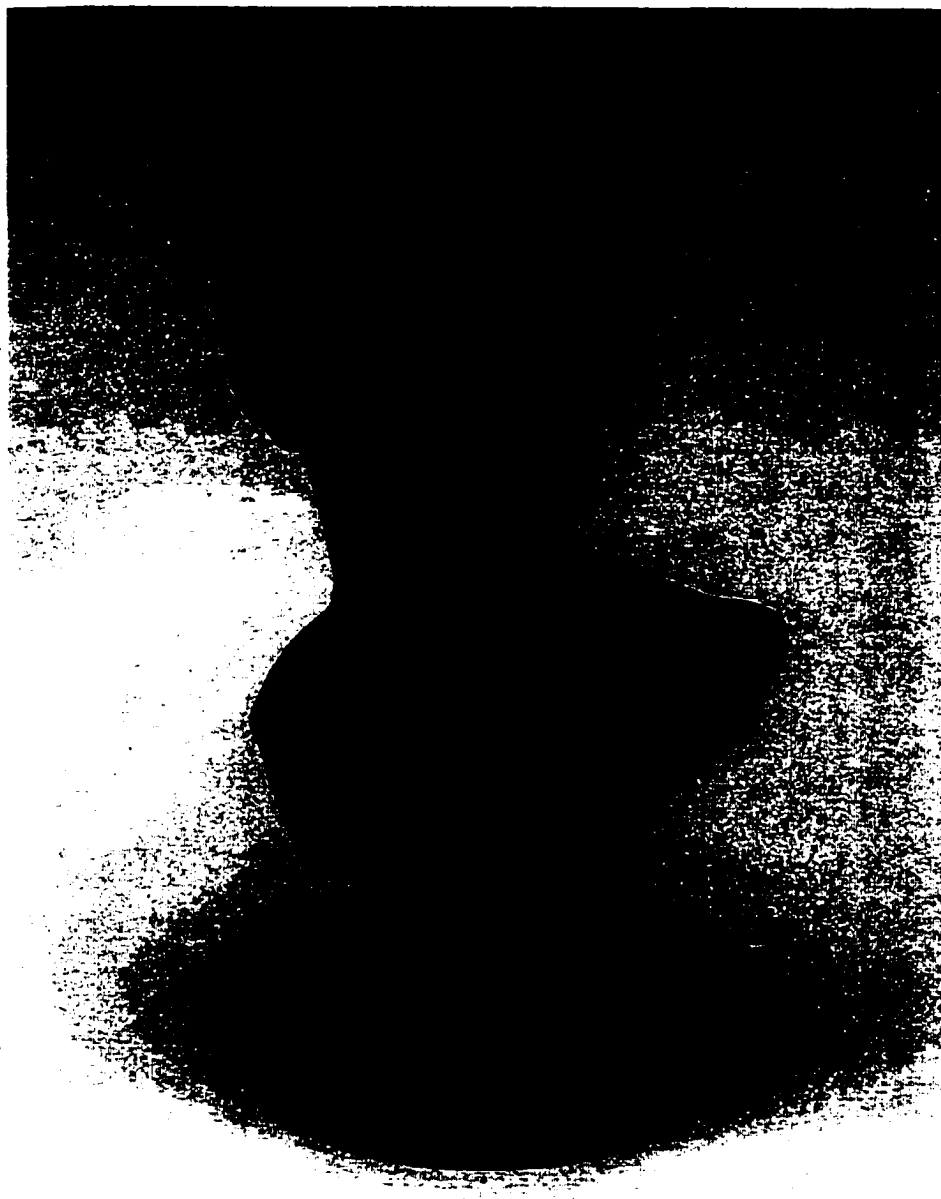


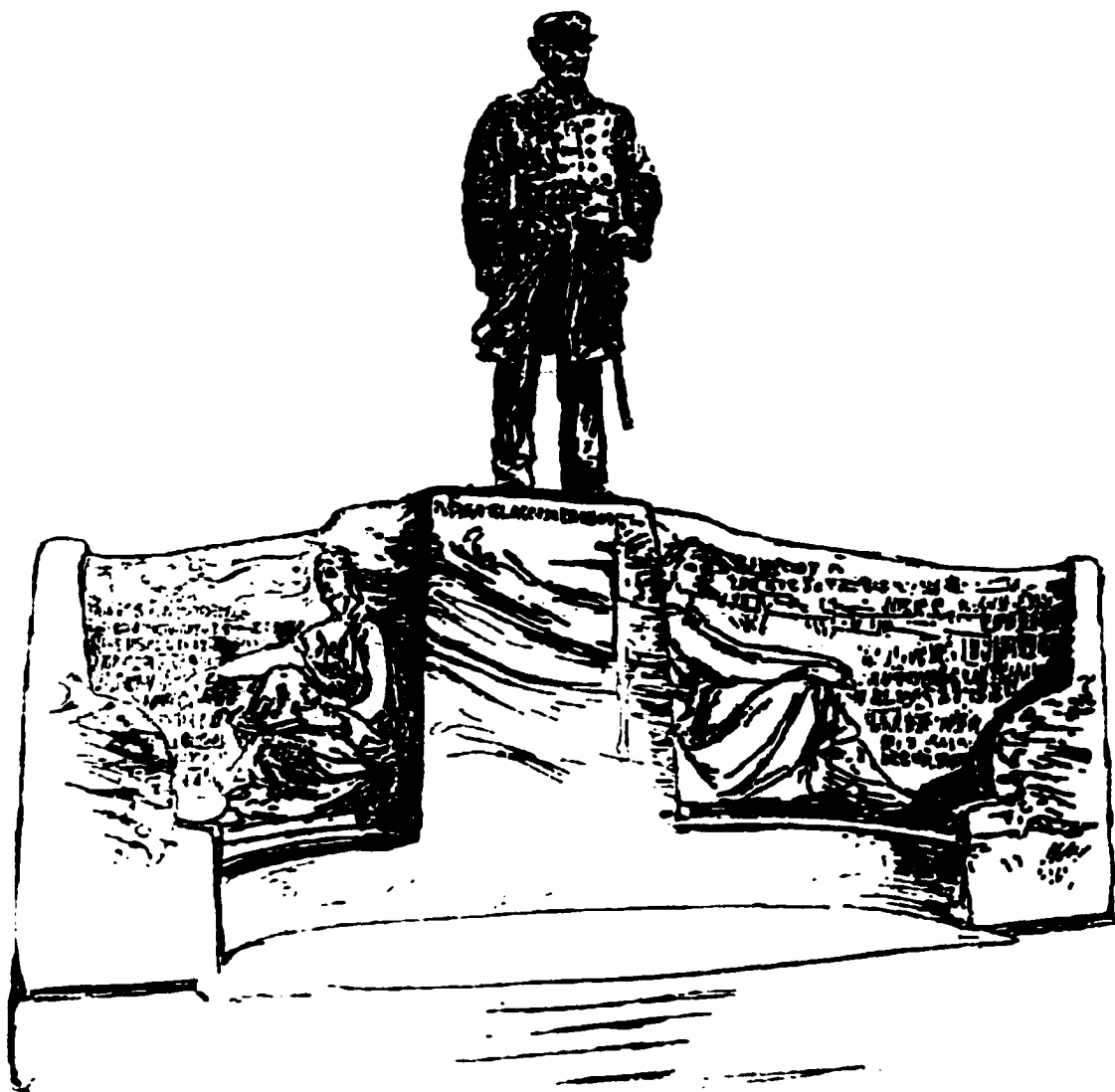
Figure 25: Olin Levi Warner, *J. Alden Weir*, 1880; this posthumous cast, 1897-98, bronze, 21 1/2 x 11 x 8 in., The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Gift of National Sculpture Society, 1898.



Figure 26: Augustus Saint-Gaudens, *Theodore Dwight Woolsey*, 1875; this carving, 1878-79, marble, 29 1/2 x 24 x 15 in., Yale University, New Haven, Connecticut, Gift of Hon. Edwards Pierrepont.



Figure 27: Augustus Saint-Gaudens, *Admiral David Glasgow Farragut Monument*, 1877-80, bronze, 99 in. H., Madison Square Park, New York.



PEN SKETCH, BY R. BLUM, OF THE FARRAGUT MONUMENT.

Figure 28: Robert Blum, pen sketch after *Admiral David Glasgow Farragut Monument* by Augustus Saint-Gaudens, published in "The Farragut Monument," *Scribner's Monthly* 22 (June 1881): 162.

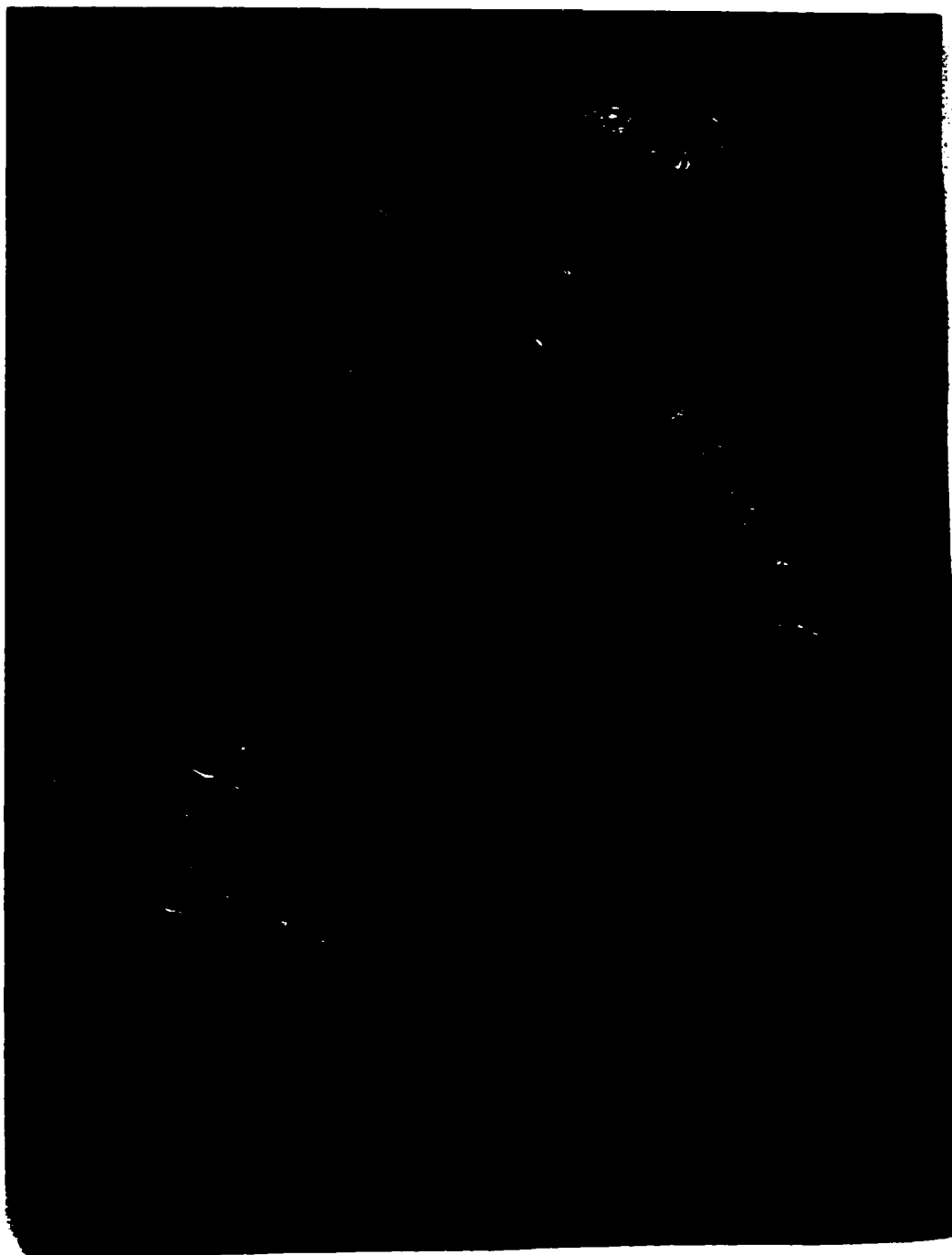


Figure 29: Augustus Saint-Gaudens, *Jules Bastien-Lepage*, 1880, bronze, 14 9/16 x 10 5/16 in., Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, Everett Fund, 1881.

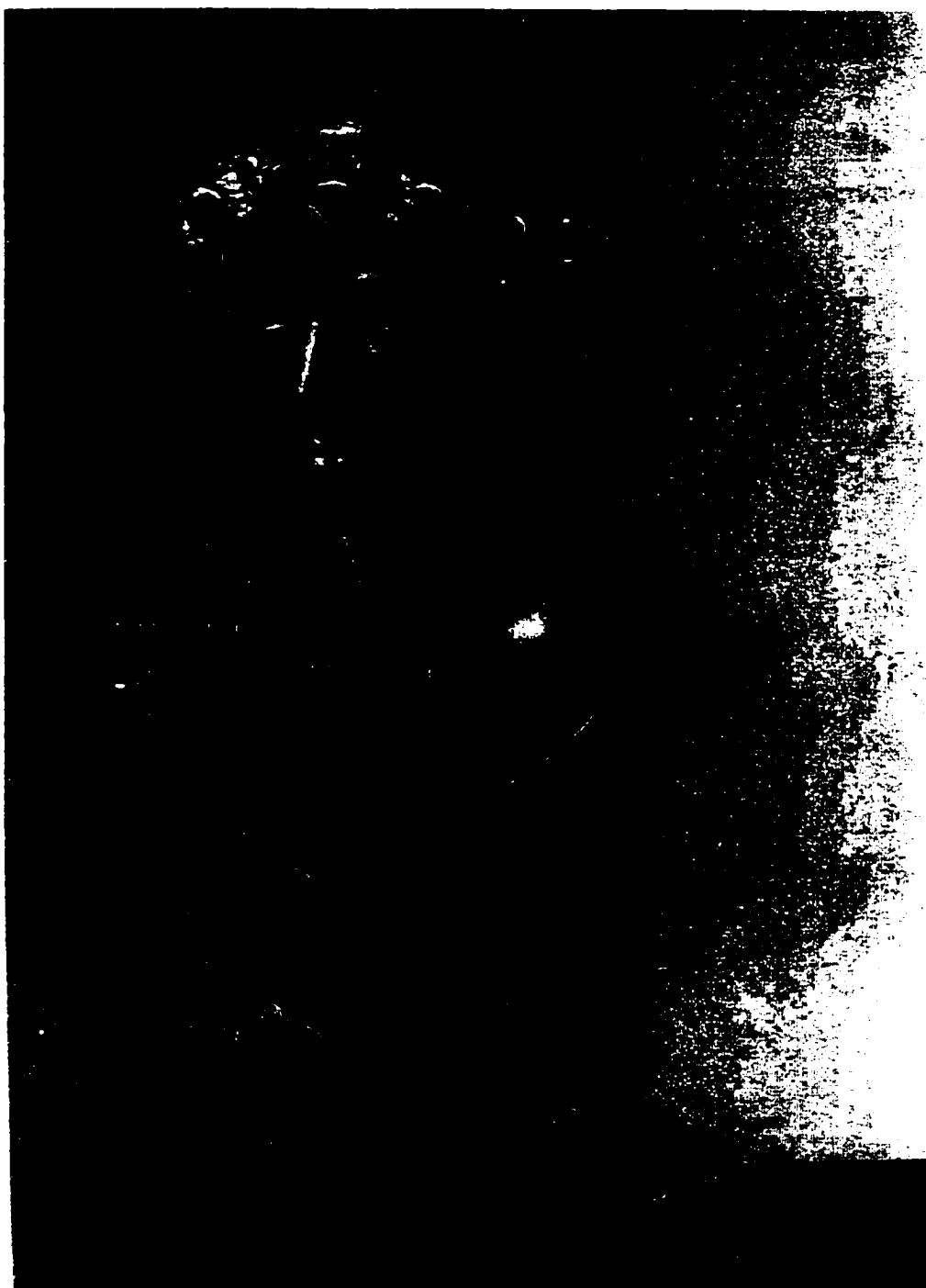


Figure 30: Olin Levi Warner, *Maud Morgan*, 1880; this cast, 1897-98, bronze, 22 3/4 x 7 1/4 x 10 in., The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Gift of National Sculpture Society, 1898.

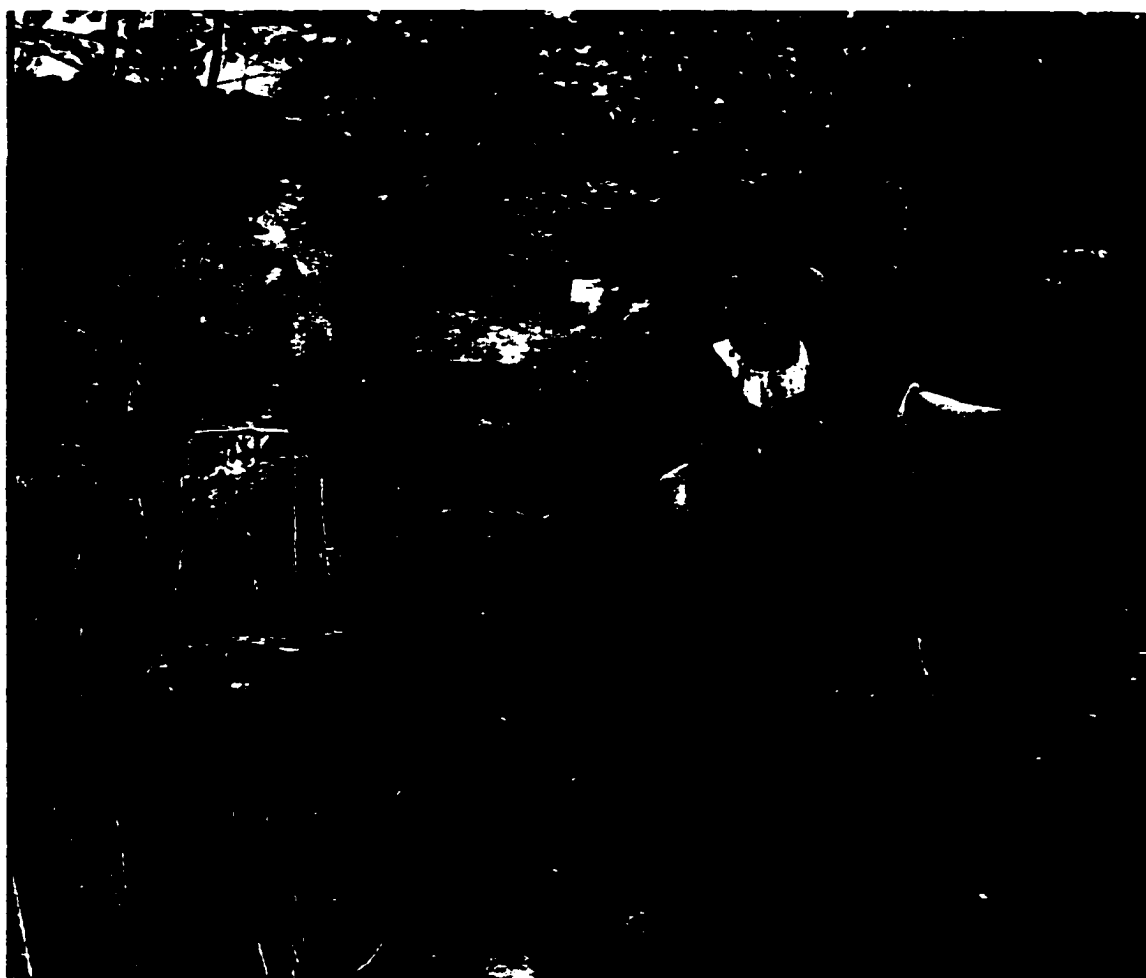


Figure 31: Jules Bastien-Lepage, *Joan of Arc*, Salon of 1880, oil on canvas, 100 x 110 in., The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Gift of Erwin Davis, 1889.

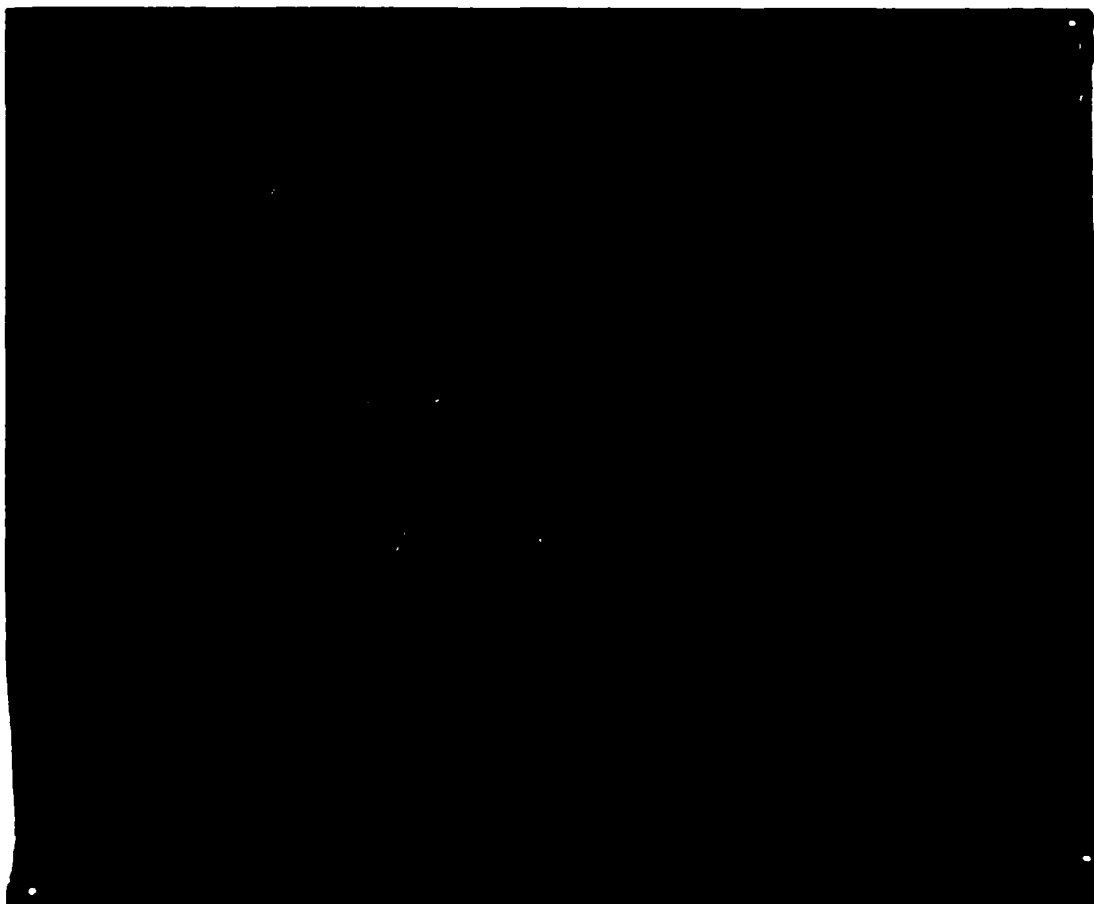


Figure 32: Augustus Saint-Gaudens, *Rodman de Kay Gilder*, 1879; this cast, probably 1880, bronze, 13 1/2 x 16 7/8 in., The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Purchase, Morris K. Jesup Fund and Mr. and Mrs. Richard J. Schwartz Gift, 1994.



Figure 33: Augustus Saint-Gaudens, *Richard W. Gilder, Helena de Kay Gilder, and Rodman de Kay Gilder*, 1879, bronze, 8 1/2 x 17 in., private collection, on loan to the Denver Art Museum.



Figure 34: Augustus Saint-Gaudens, *Dr. Henry Schiff*, 1880, bronze, 10 11/16 x 11 1/4 in., U.S. Department of Interior, National Park Service, Saint-Gaudens National Historic Site, Cornish, New Hampshire.

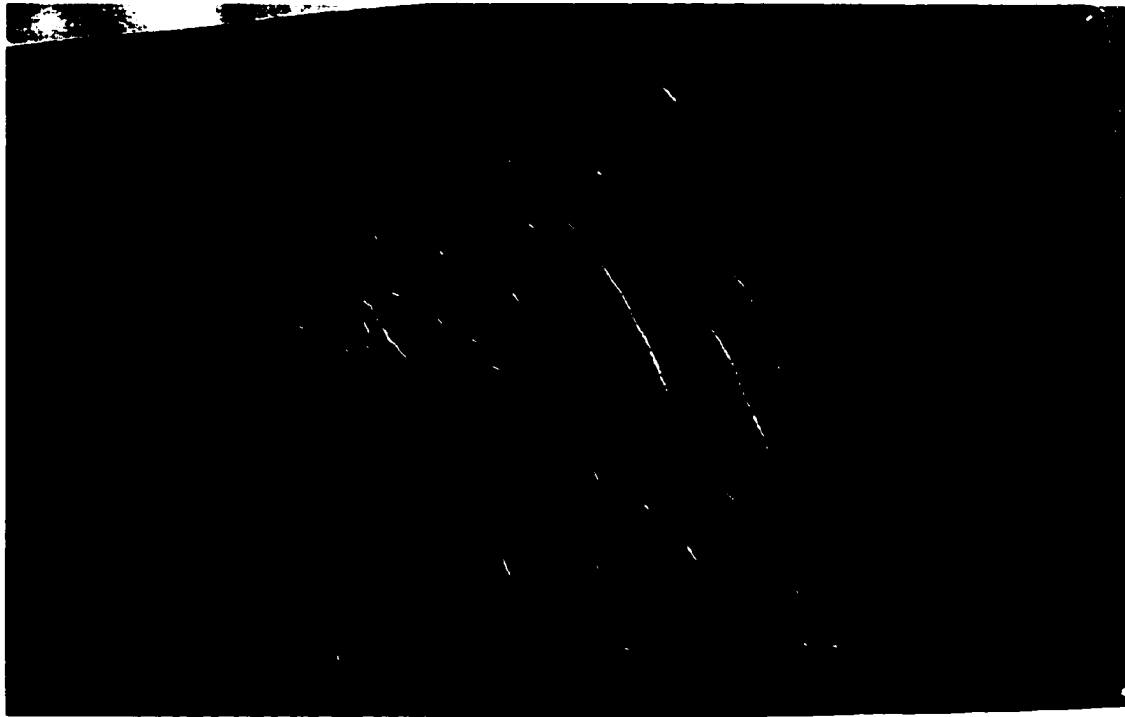


Figure 35: Augustus Saint-Gaudens, *The Children of Prescott Hall Butler*, 1880-81, bronze, 23 3/4 x 35 1/4 in., private collection.

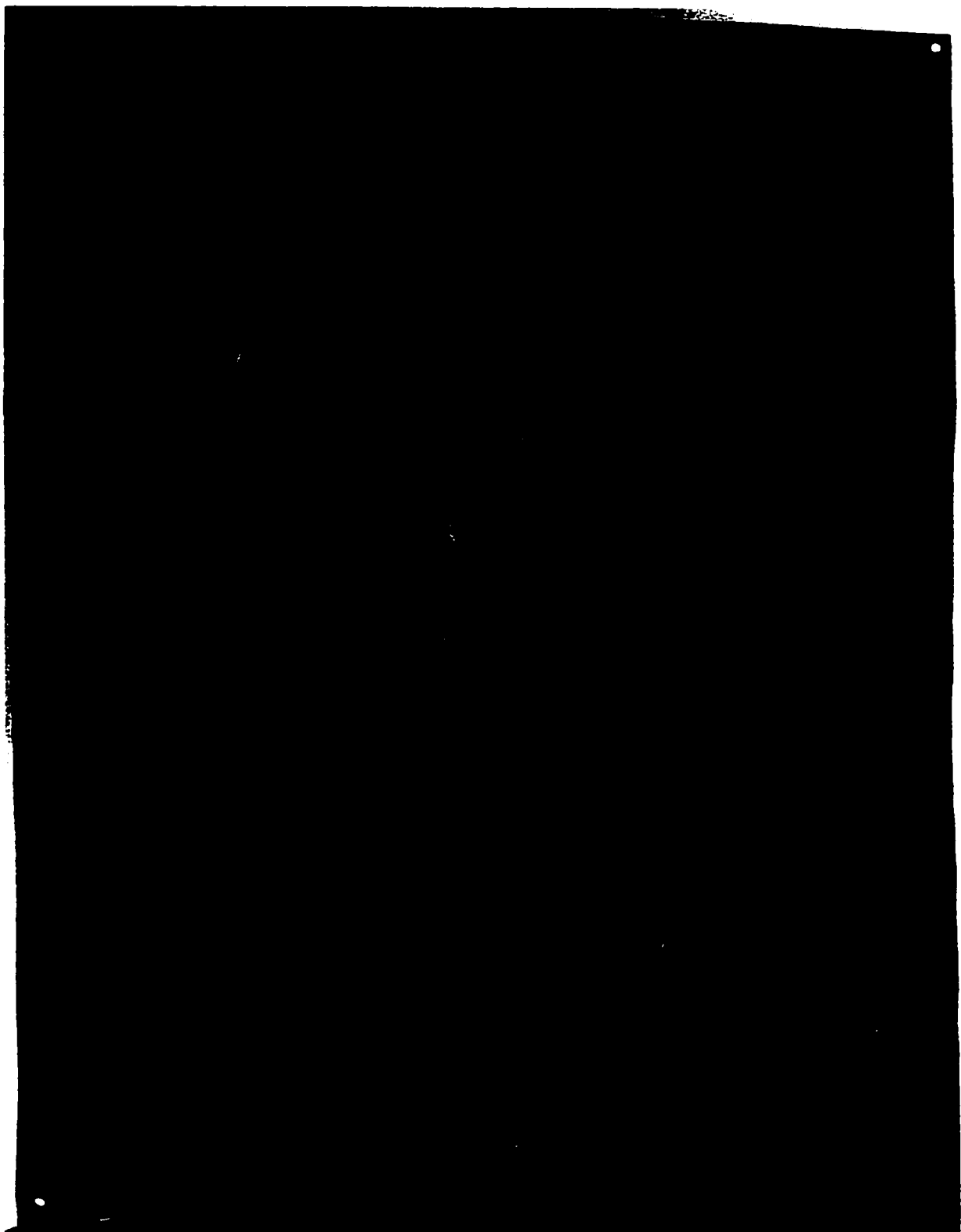


Figure 36: Augustus Saint-Gaudens, *Samuel Gray Ward*, 1881, bronze, 19 1/4 x 13 3/4 in., private collection.



Figure 37: Augustus Saint-Gaudens, *Homer Schiff Saint-Gaudens*, 1882, bronze, 19 1/2 x 9 7/8 in., U.S. Department of Interior, National Park Service, Saint-Gaudens National Historic Site, Cornish, New Hampshire.

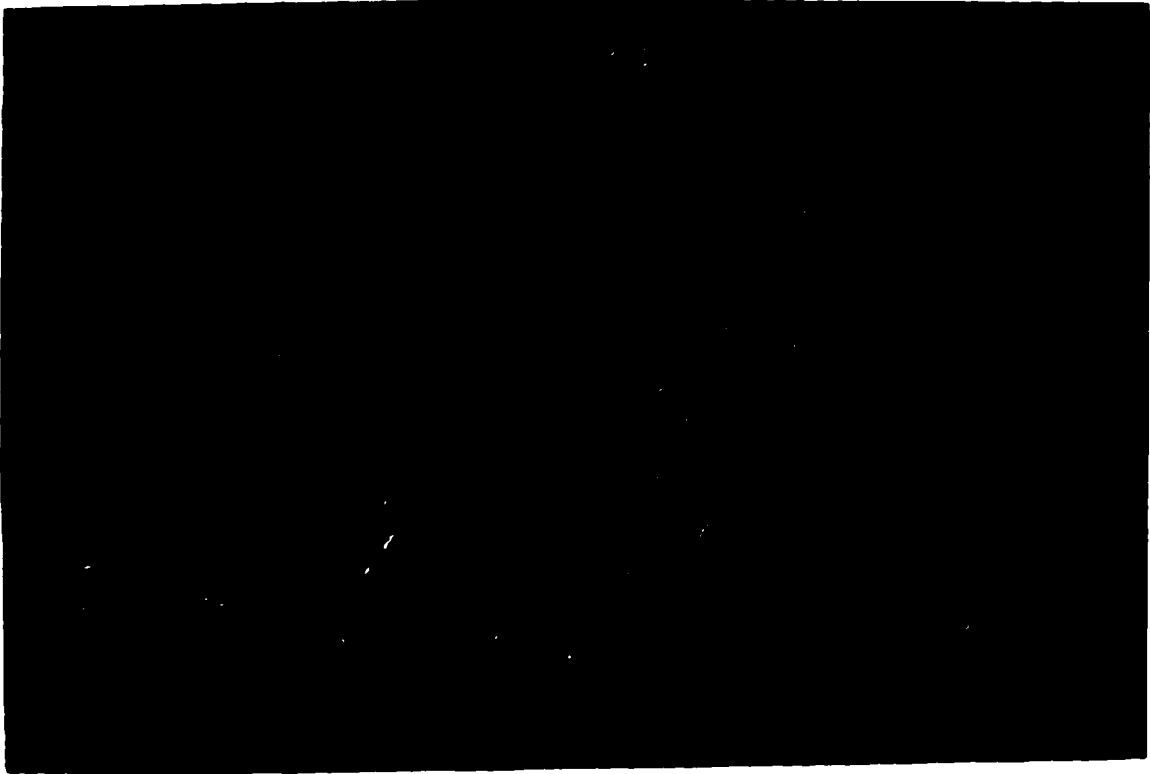


Figure 38: Augustus Saint-Gaudens, *Gertrude Vanderbilt*, 1882, bronze, 16 3/8 x 23 3/4 in., unlocated; archival photograph.



Figure 39: Augustus Saint-Gaudens, *Vanderbilt Mantelpiece*, 1881-83, marble, mosaic, oak, and cast iron, 184 3/8 x 154 7/8 x 37 1/4 in., The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Gift of Mrs. Cornelius Vanderbilt II, 1925.



Figure 40: Augustus Saint-Gaudens, *Ceres*, 1881-83, mahogany, hollywood, bronze, ivory, mother-of-pearl, marble, 62 3/4 x 25 1/4 in., U.S. Department of Interior, National Park Service, Saint-Gaudens National Historic Site, Cornish, New Hampshire.



Figure 41: Louis St. Gaudens, *Piping Pan*, ca. 1882; this posthumous cast, 1914, bronze, 43 1/2 x 12 x 19 1/4 in., The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Rogers Fund, 1914.



Figure 42: Olin Levi Warner, *Cupid and Psyche*, 1882, plaster, 26 5/8 x 27 in., Westminster Historical Society, Westminster, Massachusetts, Presented by Melville H. Warner.



Figure 43: Augustus Saint-Gaudens, *William L. Picknell*, 1878, bronze, 7 5/8 x 5 in., Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, Gift of George W. Picknell, 1936.



Figure 44: Augustus Saint-Gaudens, *Asa Gray*, 1884, bronze, 35 1/2 x 27 in., Gray Herbarium of the Botanical Gardens of Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts.



Figure 45: Augustus Saint-Gaudens, *Robert Richard Randall Memorial*, 1884, bronze, 115 in. H., Sailors' Snug Harbor, Staten Island, New York.



Figure 46: 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.



Figure 47: Olin Levi Warner, *William Crary Brownell*, 1886, bronze, 20 $\frac{3}{4}$ x 7 $\frac{1}{16}$ x 7 $\frac{1}{16}$ in., American Academy of Arts and Letters, New York, Gift of Mrs. William C. Brownell, 1952.

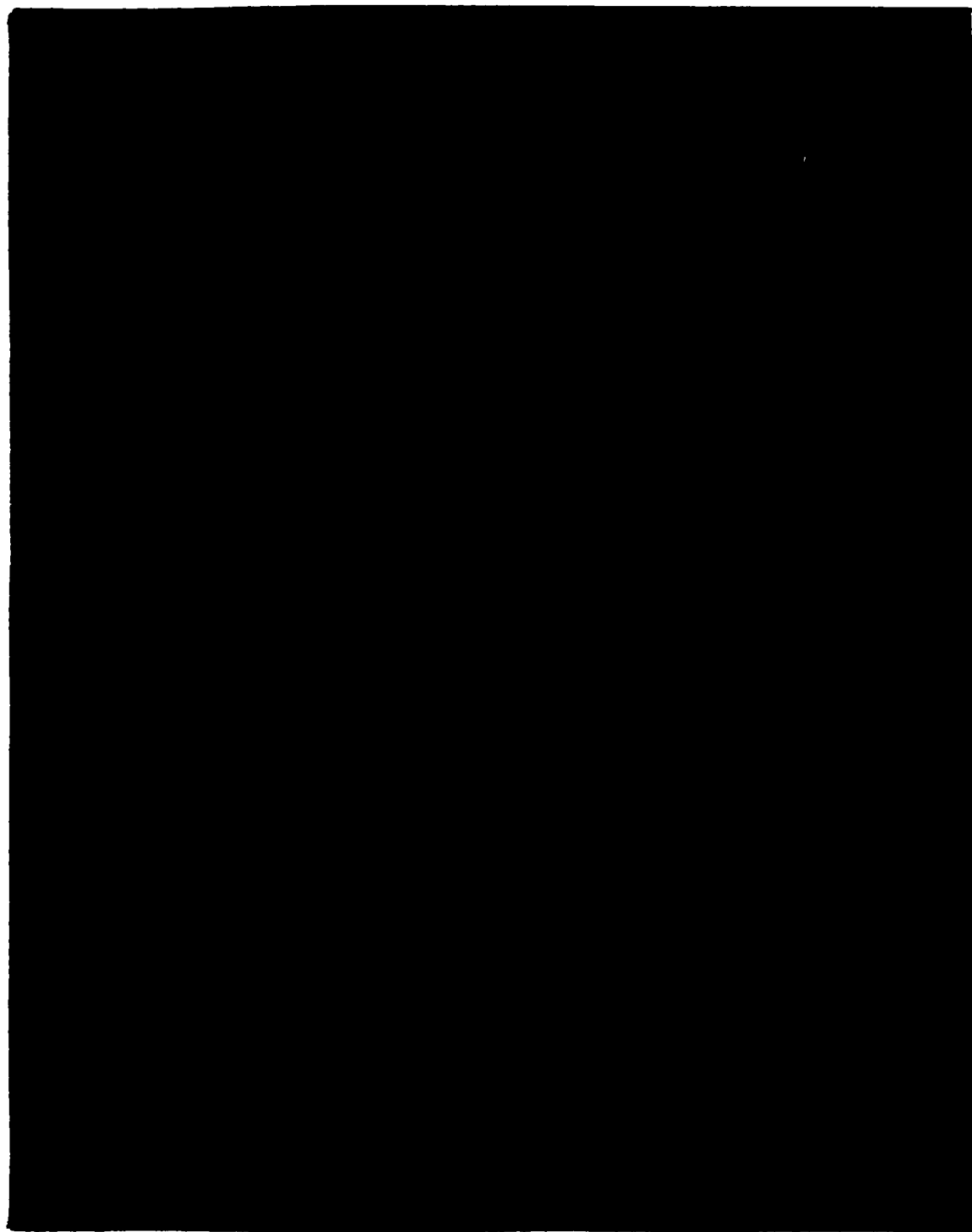


Figure 48: Augustus Saint-Gaudens, *The Children of Jacob H. Schiff*, 1884-85, 67 5/16 x 50 3/8 in., bronze, U.S. Department of Interior, National Park Service, Saint-Gaudens National Historic Site, Cornish, New Hampshire.

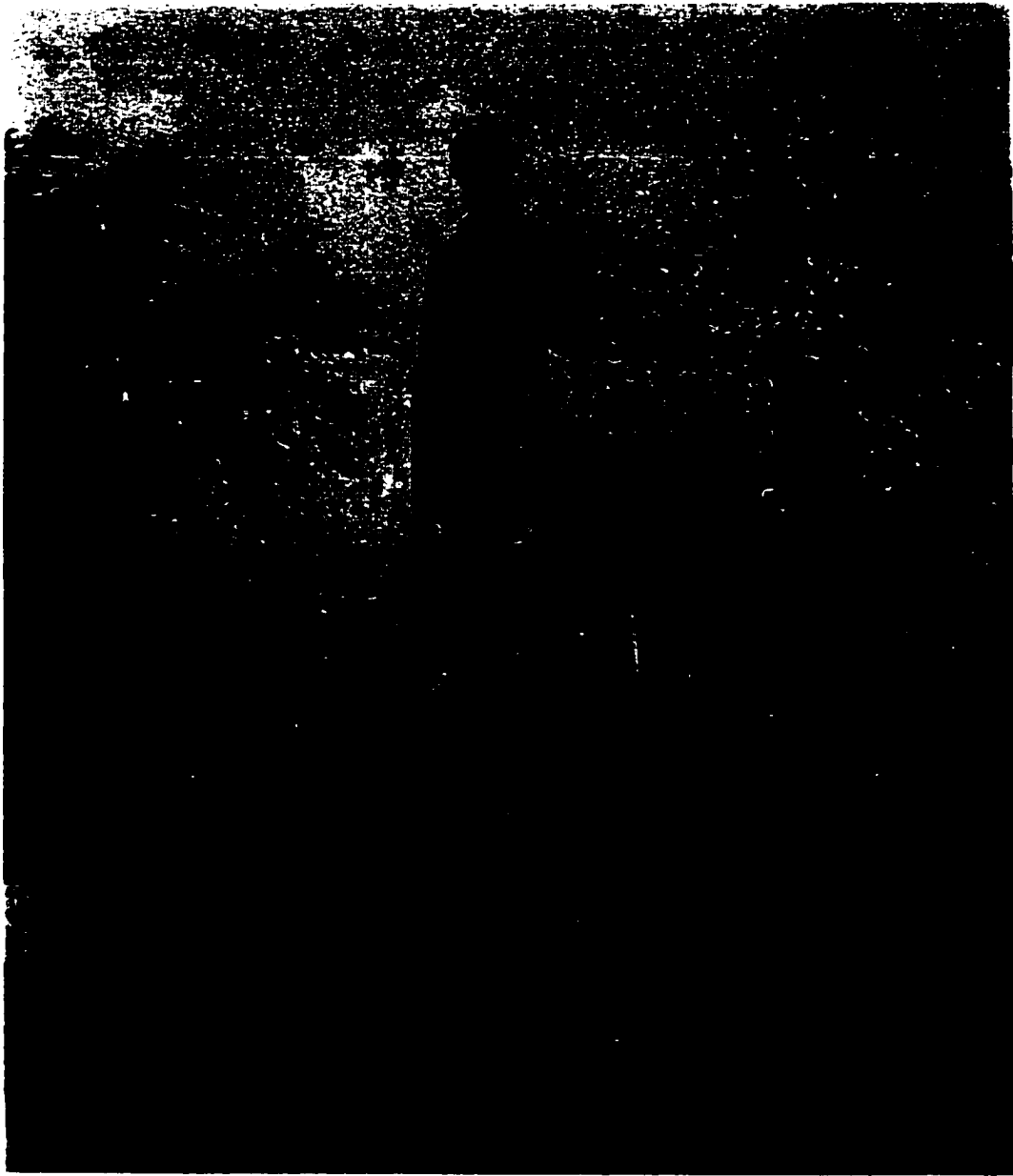


Figure 49: Augustus Saint-Gaudens, *Abraham Lincoln: The Man (The Standing Lincoln)*, 1884-87, bronze, 144 in. H., Lincoln Park, Chicago.

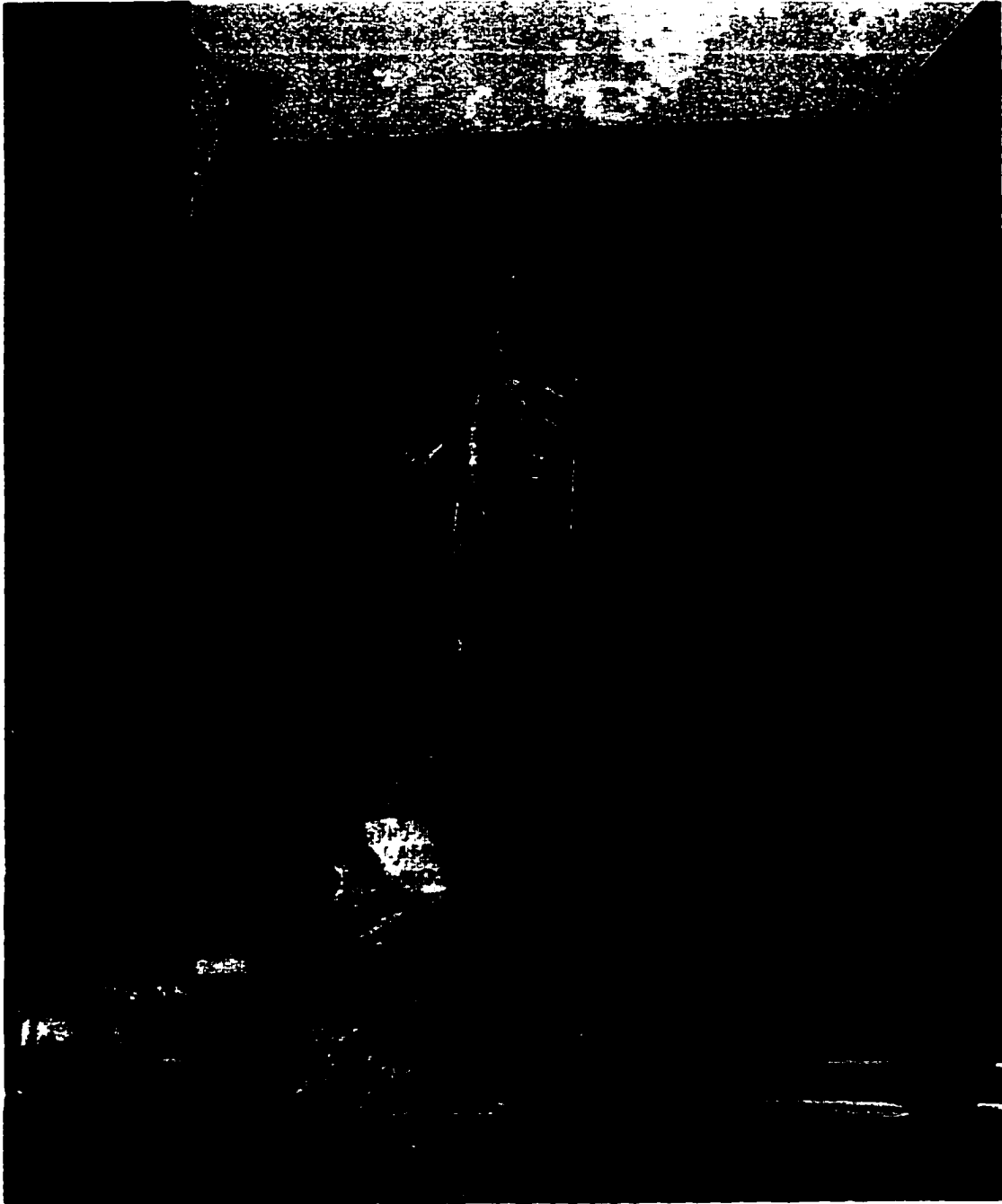


Figure 50: Augustus Saint-Gaudens, *The Puritan (Deacon Samuel Chapin)*, 1883-86, bronze, 103 1/2 in. H., Merrick Park, Springfield, Massachusetts.

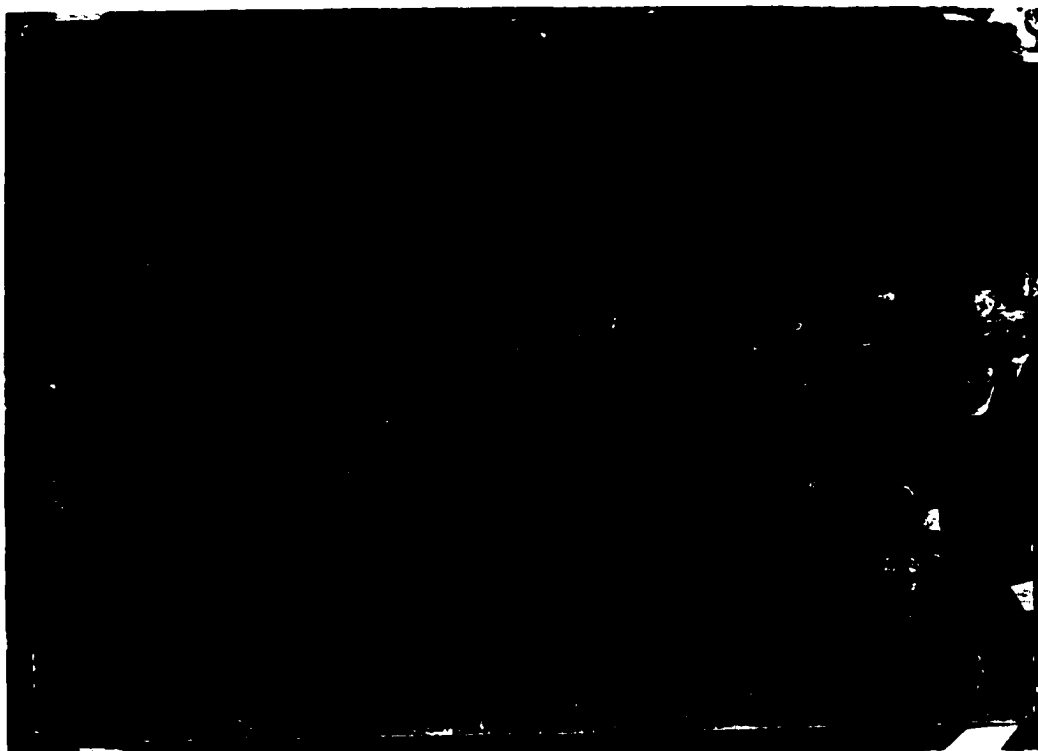


Figure 51: De Witt Clinton Ward, "Soiree in St. Gaudens Studio, 36th Street," photograph, n.d., American Academy of Arts and Letters, New York.



Figure 52: Engraving after *Abraham Lincoln: The Man (The Standing Lincoln)* by Augustus Saint-Gaudens, published in Mariana Griswold Van Rensselaer, "Saint-Gaudens's Lincoln," *Century Magazine* 35 (November 1887): 38.



Figure 53: 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.



Figure 54: Augustus Saint-Gaudens, *Henry W. Bellows Memorial*, 1885, 124 x 53 in., bronze, All Souls Unitarian Church, New York.



Figure 55: Augustus Saint-Gaudens, *Mrs. Stanford White (Bessie Springs Smith)*, 1884; this carving, by 1888, marble, 25 x 12 in., The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Gift of Erving Wolf Foundation, 1976.



Figure 56: Augustus Saint-Gaudens, *General William Tecumseh Sherman*, 1888; this posthumous cast, 1910, bronze, 31 1/4 x 21 1/2 x 11 1/2 in., The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Gift by subscription through the Saint-Gaudens Memorial Committee, 1912



Figure 57: Augustus Saint-Gaudens, *Louise Miller Howland*, 1888, bronze, 39 1/8 x 23 1/2 in., private collection.

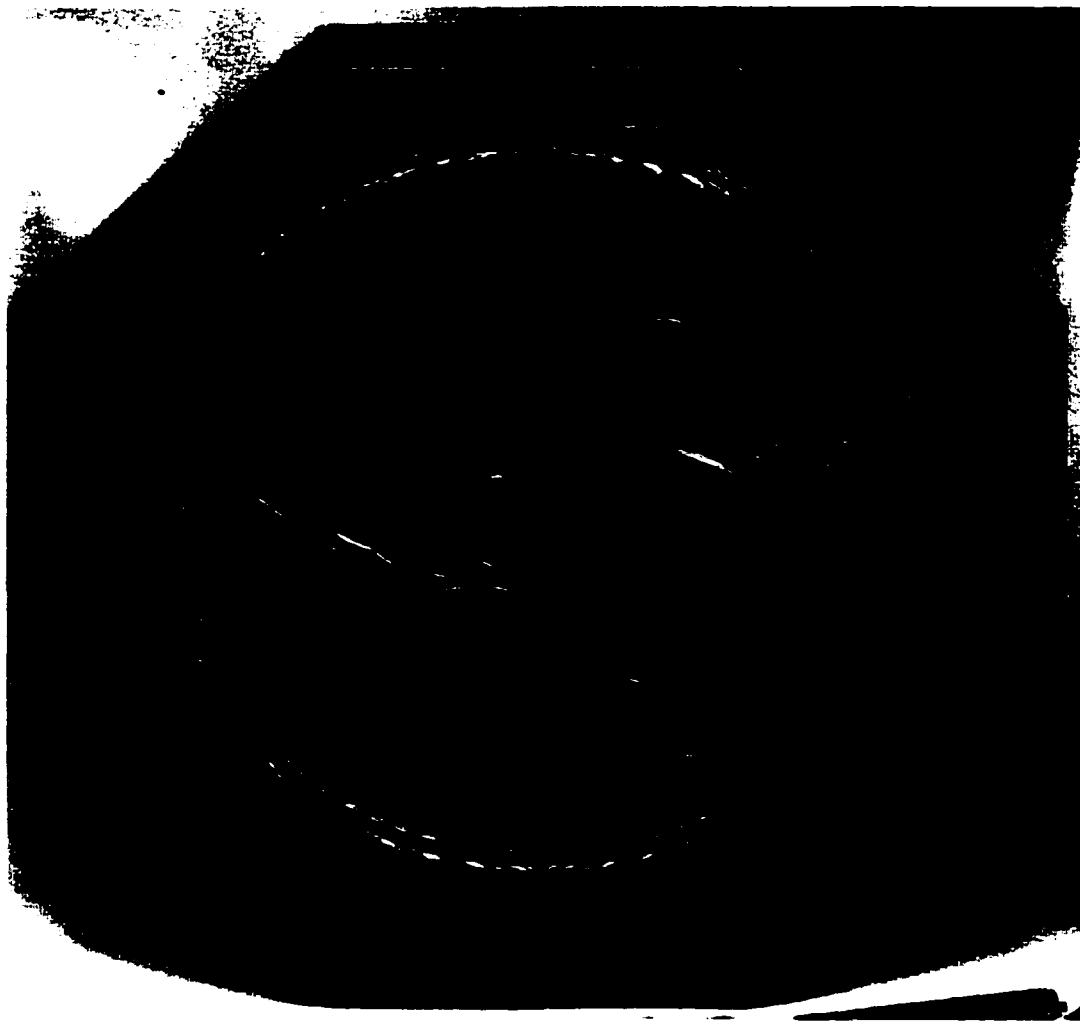


Figure 58: Augustus Saint-Gaudens, *Robert Louis Stevenson*, 1887; this cast, 1890, 36 in. Diam., Princeton University Library, Princeton, New Jersey.

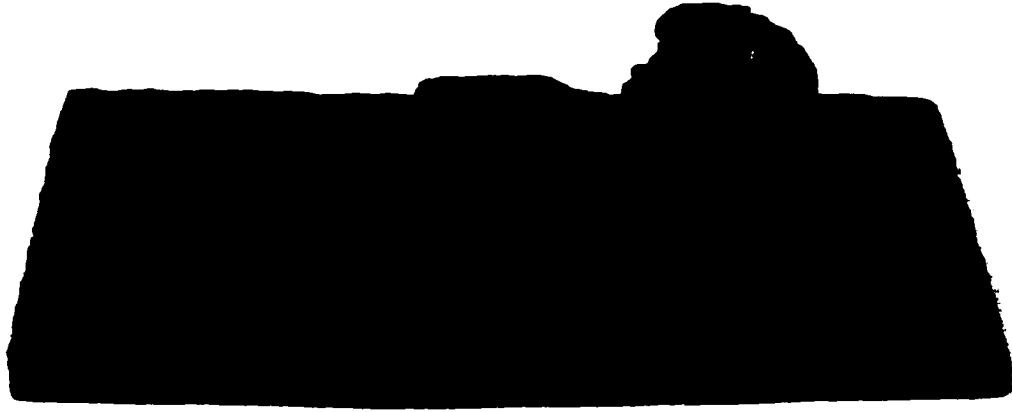


Figure 59: Edward Clark Potter, *Sleeping Faun*, 1887-89; this cast, 1919, bronze, 11 x 38 1/4 x 17 1/2 in., The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Rogers Fund, 1919.



Figure 60: Augustus Saint-Gaudens, *Mrs. Schuyler Van Rensselaer (Mariana Griswold)*, 1888; this cast, 1890, bronze, 20 3/8 x 7 3/4 in., The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Gift of Mrs. Schuyler Van Rensselaer, 1917.



Figure 61: Augustus Saint-Gaudens, *Violet Sargent*, 1890, marble, 50 1/4 x 34 1/4 in., U.S. Department of Interior, National Park Service, Saint-Gaudens National Historic Site, Cornish, New Hampshire.



Figure 62: John Singer Sargent, *Portrait of a Boy*, 1890, oil on canvas, 59 3/4 x 56 in., The Carnegie Museum of Art, Pittsburgh, Patrons Art Fund, 1932.

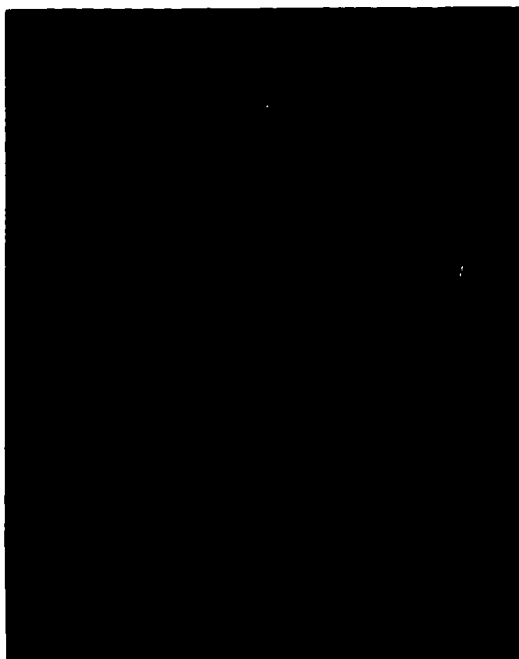


Figure 63: Herbert Adams, *Adeline Valentine (Pond) Adams*, 1887-89, marble, 27 1/4 in. H., The Hispanic Society of America, New York



Figure 64: Frederick William MacMonnies, *Young Faun with Heron*, 1889-90; this cast, 1890, 27 1/4 x 15 x 9 1/4 in., The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Gift of Edward D. Adams, 1927.

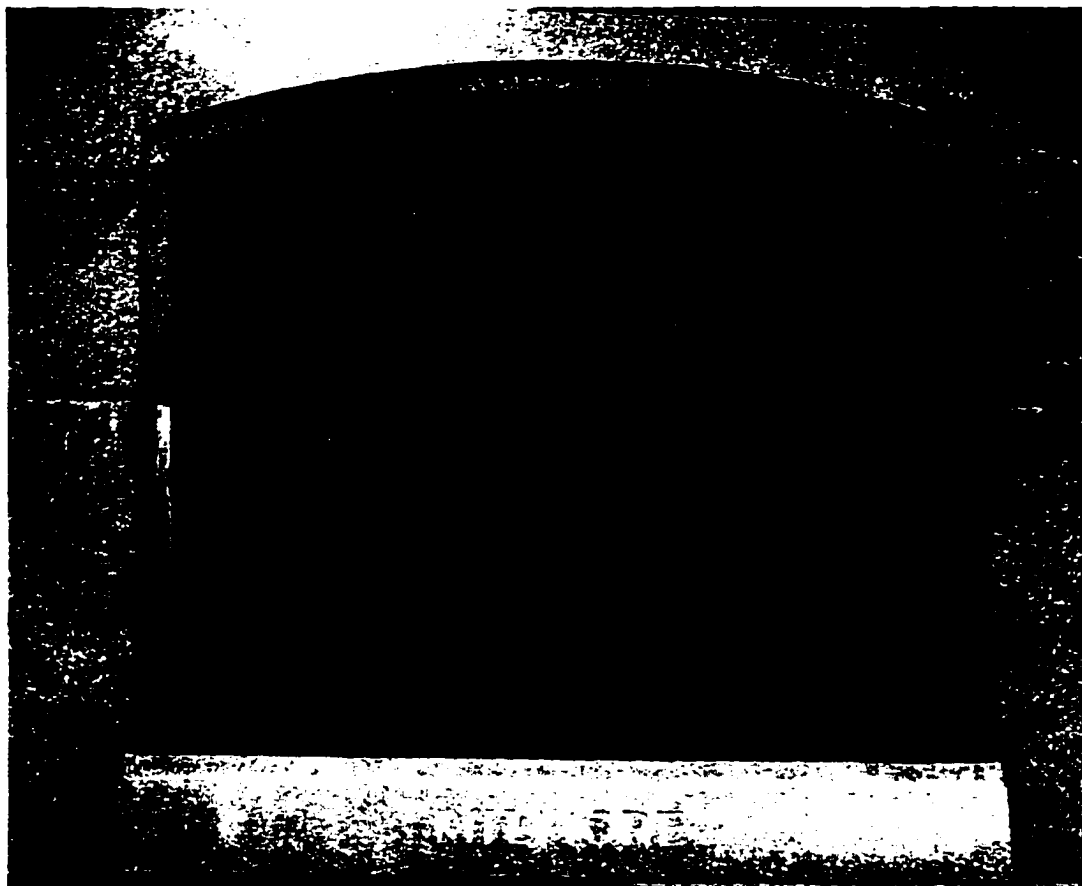


Figure 65: Daniel Chester French, *The Angel of Death and the Sculptor from the Milmore Memorial*, 1889-93, bronze and granite, 122 3/4 x 132 3/4 in., Forest Hills Cemetery, Jamaica Plain, Massachusetts.

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