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## Book Reviews

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# BOOK REVIEWS

1340 words

## The Works of Augustus Saint-Gaudens

by

John H. Dryfhout

University Press of New England  
\$60.00

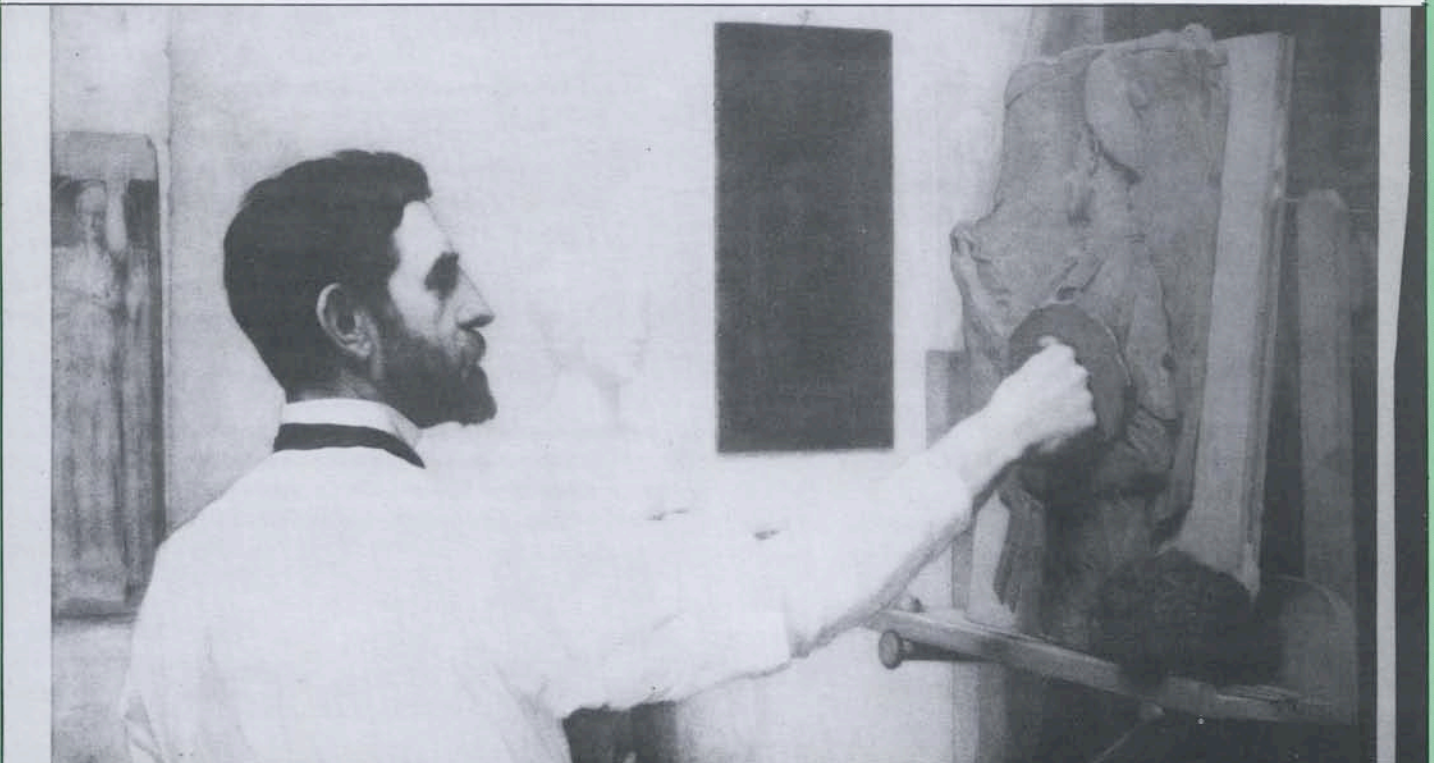
There is a myth in art comprising the belief that an artist's reputation is greater -- and his works more appreciated -- after his death than during his life. Too many brilliant and successful careers which were heaped with laurels in their own day, but which have been much less celebrated since, serve to refute this conception; among them is the career of Augustus Saint-Gaudens. By the time Saint-Gaudens died in 1907 at the age of fifty-nine, he had become a celebrity both here and abroad and had been the recognized leader in American sculpture for many years, as is evident in the range of impressive awards and honors enjoyed by the artist during his own lifetime. The French government alone had presented him with the most coveted of artistic distinctions, naming him corresponding member of both the *Institute de France* and the *Societe des Beaux-Arts*,

making him an Officer of the Legion of Honor, and purchasing for the State a bronze cast of his allegorical figure *Amor Caritas*. The fine arts academies of London and Brussels also had conferred upon him honorary memberships, and in his own country Saint-Gaudens had become an Academician of the National Academy of Design and an honorary member of the Architectural League. He had received honorary doctoral degrees from Harvard, Princeton and Yale, and had been feted and awarded special medals, various government appointments, and exhibition honors. Even more significant were the "prizes" obtained in the form of major public and private sculpture commissions which adoring clients were willing to wait, sometimes years, to receive from his hand.

In the year following his death, the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York held a retrospective memorial exhibition of one hundred and fifty-four of his works; some five thousand people were in attendance at the opening. When the exhibition was opened again at the Corcoran Gallery in Washington, D.C., tribute speeches were made by President Theodore Roosevelt and the ambassadors of France, Britain, Japan, Brazil and Mexico, signifying the extent of the artist's renown. At that time it seemed that the reputation of Saint-Gaudens not only as

America's greatest sculptor, but as an international artistic leader of the late nineteenth century, was assured. Yet, though several smaller showings of his work occurred in the succeeding years, the last important exhibition of his sculpture -- forty-six works at the Detroit Institute of Arts -- was no more recent than 1915, unless one also takes into account a showing of his portrait reliefs at the National Portrait Gallery in 1969.

A similar neglect of the artist is to be observed in the paucity of published material about him. This is not to overlook the fact that, in the three-quarters of a century since his death, histories of American art rarely fail to mention Saint-Gaudens, usually in a dutiful summary of a few paragraphs that often qualify admiration with reproaches relating to the academic basis for his style. However, during this same period of time, until the past year, only two books have appeared which are devoted to the artist. One is *The Reminiscences of Saint-Gaudens*, compiled by the artist's son Homer Saint-Gaudens, who included his own recollections about his father among the insights and lively anecdotes of the artist's highly cultivated account of his own career. The two-volume work, published six years after the sculptor's death, is so thorough and fascinating a narrative of his life and work, and so revealing of the times and attitudes



Augustus Saint-Gaudens in His Studio in 1887, by Kenyon Cox, 1908,

Collection of the Metropolitan Museum of Art  
(Photo: Metropolitan Museum of Art)

### Book Reviews continued

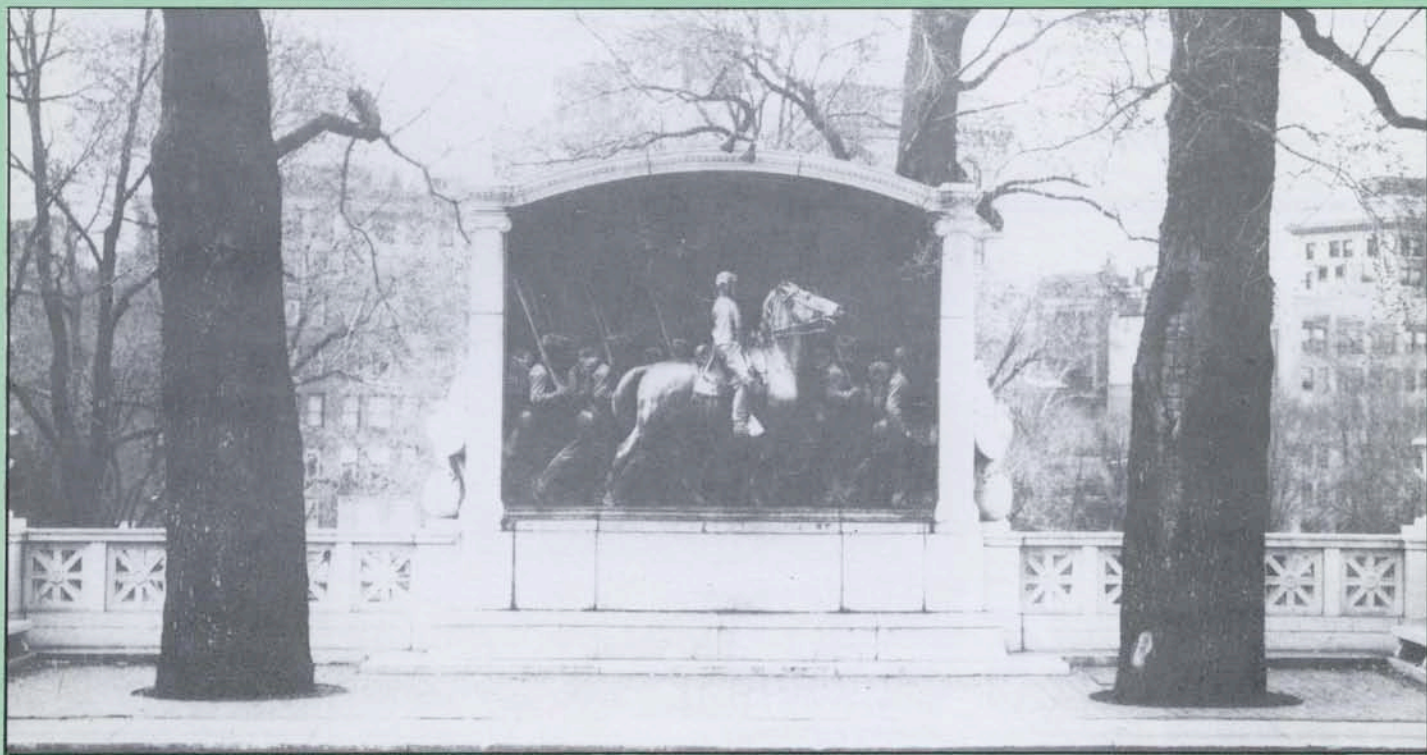
that contributed to and defined his career, that one might excuse the lack of later monographs with the assumption that would-be biographers of the artist had been frightened off by the completeness with which Saint-Gaudens had done the job himself. However, *Reminiscences* had been out of print for decades before its republication by the ethereal Garland Publishing Company in 1976, making it not readily available either before or after republication.

Nevertheless, for those who wish a real understanding of the artist, it is the primary source that provides important background information on his major projects. Taking as

The second of the two posthumous publications devoted to the artist, and the only objective biography, is Louise Hall Tharp's *Saint-Gaudens and the Gilded Era*. While well-based in fact and packed with information, it is strictly a personal and social history without artistic analysis or critical study. In 1969 when it was published, a reassessment of Saint-Gaudens' career could have been timely and might well have rekindled interest in his work and a new appreciation for his achievements. Instead, the biography, with its writing style which seems aimed at the high school reader, only confirms the dearth of more in-depth studies of the artist that existed until the publication last year of John H. Dryfhout's *The Works of Augustus Saint-Gaudens*.

for the first time. These, along with photographs relating to the artist and his life, total more than five hundred illustrations, making the book an incredible visual account of the artist without considering the text.

The catalogue itself is a prodigious accomplishment. For each of two hundred and fourteen entries a factual description is given along with a listing of all the casts of an individual sculpture and their locations, and mention of previous studies, variations, and related works. Exhibitions of the work and any bibliographical references to it are also listed. Therefore, each entry is, as it should be, a complete documentation and history of the object. An important work like the Shaw Memorial has an entry that runs for



Saint-Gaudens -- Shaw Memorial, Boston Common

an example the General Robert Gould Shaw Memorial (which is so well known and loved in Boston that a public subscription recently provided funds for its restoration), Saint-Gaudens recounts the history of the commission and his changing approach to the project. It began as an equestrian figure in-the-round until the Shaw family objected on the grounds that "he had not been a great commander and only men of the highest rank should be so honored." Therefore, despite what Saint-Gaudens considered to be a nominal fee of \$15,000 that he was receiving for the work, he came up with the idea of associating the General with his troops, who were black volunteers, in high relief. From that point, the artist called it "a labor of love," spending almost fourteen years on its completion.

Dryfhout is curator of Aspet, the Saint-Gaudens National Historic Site in Cornish, New Hampshire. Through his long-term contact with the sculpture collection, personal papers and library there, he is of course eminently qualified to present material on the artist. Indeed, the book is the very performance of Dryfhout's responsibilities as the curator or caretaker not only of the artifacts of another man's creative production and memorabilia relating to it, but of that man's career and reputation in the broadest sense. The volume he gives us is that most valuable resource on an artist's work -- the *catalogue raisonne*, a listing and description of all known sculptures by Saint-Gaudens. The catalogue entries are accompanied by photographs of the works, many published

eight pages and features nineteen photographs, including pencil and plaster sketches and six of the more than forty portraits of Negro men that Saint-Gaudens modeled in the process of realizing the monument. The description of the piece includes James Russell Lowell's poem and the commentary by Charles W. Eliot appearing as inscriptions on the front and back of the sculpture and an account of General Shaw himself, a history of this commission (received through the influence of architect Henry Hobson Richardson), and even mention of its recent restoration. Following the catalogue, appendices deal with the Saint-Gaudens studio, the artist's assistants, works by his brother Louis, works previously misattributed to Augustus Saint-Gaudens, and a useful listing of his

### Book Reviews continued

sculpture in public collections. A comprehensive bibliography and indices of works by title and by subject form the last sections of Dryfhout's book.

Dryfhout's aim is appropriately -- and importantly -- objective documentation in its strictest and fullest application, and this he achieves admirably. No future scholarship on Saint-Gaudens or on this period of American sculpture will be able to ignore this invaluable contribution to the field, and hopefully it will spawn and nourish further important studies on the artist.

With Dryfhout's book and a large-scale exhibition of Saint-Gaudens underway, it seems apparent that his role in American art as a prolific, imaginative, powerful and influential sculptor, while never forgotten, is gaining in importance and interest again.

by Roger T. Dunn  
Assistant Professor of Art

## The Best Defense

by  
Alan Dershowitz  
Random House, 1982 - \$16.95

What do a nude bather and a terrorist bomber have in common? Not much, you might think. However, read Alan Dershowitz's book, *The Best Defense*, and your answer may change. They both have rights. Basic to the foundation of our society are the concepts of fundamental rights: the right to due process and the right to a feeling of security within the legal system. Another common link is that their rights are supported within the legal setting by Mr. Dershowitz. In this book Dershowitz gives his readers a guided tour through the vagaries of American justice, with its weaknesses, its corruption and, ultimately, its strength. There is much for everyone to contemplate and learn from this most readable book.

Mr. Dershowitz is a professor of Law at Harvard University, where he teaches the future generation of lawyers the theory of criminal law and the legal system. But Mr. Dershowitz is also a practitioner. *The Best Defense* is a collection of some of his cases, not all of which he won, but where in every

instance he practiced with dedication what he believes to be the noblest of all work, that of defense attorney.

His clients are not all lovable. Sheldon Seigel did, in fact, manufacture a bomb. That bomb was used by his fellow members of the Jewish Defense League in their surprise attack on the office of Sol Hurok, musical impresario for cultural and artistic performances. As a result of the attack Iris Kones, an office assistant, was killed. In legal terms she was the victim of a felony-murder, a crime punishable by death. Other attorneys, unable to tolerate or condone terrorist tactics, refused to defend him. Dershowitz, however, saw in this case as in others throughout the book a need on behalf of the legal community for a commitment to individual liberties and to a defense of threatened legal rights. The government prosecution, in its zeal for conviction of Seigel and other members of the JDL, made use of wiretaps and thereby

overstepped the bounds of legality. The defendants went free. The verdict may be disturbing, but Dershowitz had made the ultimate issue one of the government responsibility. Might its intervention and lack of ethics have been the larger crime?

The First Amendment gives rise to some of the more emotional and controversial issues of our society. At Harvard, the Quincy House Film Society needed to raise some money and decided to show *Deep Throat* as a fund raiser. In a separate case, Harry Reems, the male performer, is indicted in Memphis for conspiracy to transport an obscene film across state lines. Enter Mr. Dershowitz and his involvement -- legal only -- in *Deep Throat*. An injunction follows and Mr. Dershowitz defends both Reems and Quincy House. Both are acquitted on narrow legal points. The story of Reems and the students is often amusing, but the *Deep Throat* case raised questions of moral values, as well as questions on the



Saint-Gaudens -- Adams Memorial, Rock Creek Church Cemetery

## Book Reviews continued

deeper issue of First Amendment rights in American society.

The importance of First Amendment freedom takes on a new meaning when contrasted with a system notable for its absence, the Soviet Union. The most poignant of the Soviet stories centers on dissident Anatoly Shaharansky. Shaharansky's involvement with the Helsinki human rights Monitors and their determination to talk about the cause of human rights and the plight of Soviet Jews resulted in his arrest by the KGB on grounds of being a CIA agent. Such a crime of high treason carries the inevitable sentence of the death penalty. Responding to a plea from Shaharansky's wife, Dershowitz becomes his lawyer and, following the tactic of a good defense attorney, turns the world into a courtroom. Contrary to all State Department policy, Dershowitz gets President Carter to deny the Soviet government's charge against its own citizen. Now the death penalty will, in effect, be branding the President of the United States a liar. Long-distance defense does not work. Dershowitz's cable closing argument does not influence the Soviet judges. The prisoner, standing alone at trial, is defenseless. The death sentence is averted, but not the guilty verdict; and a term of imprisonment, which is to all intents a slow method of death, is handed down. We now have a clearer picture of Soviet "justice" vs. the individual standing without rights or defense.

The stories go on. The police heroes in the movies *The Prince of the City* become the real-life antagonists when Mr. Dershowitz charges police entrapment and concealment and questions the role of detective Robert Leuci, the U.S. Attorney's office which encourages him and the judges who support him. In another case handled by Dershowitz the Tison boys spring their father from the penitentiary and he goes on a hideous rampage, killing and finally being killed. The sons are charged, tried and convicted of murder because if they had not helped him to escape there would not have been any killings. Under Arizona law their assistance in the escape made it possible for them to be guilty of the murders committed by their father. Dershowitz asks whether the brothers, now on Arizona's Death Row, should die for their father's crime.

At the same time that he is defending the lawbreaker in these cases, Dershowitz is everywhere, unceasingly, charging the government with its responsibility to recognize and respect the rights of the individual; in so doing he is our watchdog, guarding those First Amendment values which still make the American legal system one worth protecting.

by Pauline Harrington  
Instructor of Political Science

Saint-Gaudens  
Law supported by Power and Love  
Boston Public Library Group

## The Little Drummer Girl

by John LeCarré  
Alfred A. Knopf, \$15.95

John LeCarré has taught us most of what we know about espionage. Ian Fleming's James Bond may have the glamour, gadgets and girls; LeCarré's agents have operated in the grit and grubbiness of cold war Europe that we would like to believe is the real thing. His operatives have presented themselves as ordinary people who practice their tradecraft in the most ordinary settings. It has been LeCarré's special talent to make us believe that when we walk through the park or eat in a restaurant those others conversing on a bench or whispering at a table may be engaged in clandestine business of international importance. George Smiley is a plain man devoted to entrapping Karla, the mastermind of Moscow Center. Most of Western Europe serves as his theatre of operations before the three-novel intrigue is concluded.

And, when it is concluded, we see that these agents and double agents are finally betrayed by very familiar weaknesses. Bill Haydon, Karla's mole in England's "circus,"



## Book Reviews continued

is trapped by an imperfect recollection of one of his liaisons with Smiley's wife. Karla defects out of fatherly concern for his daughter whom he has placed in a Swiss sanatorium. Brilliant, calculating, detached as these agents may be, each possesses deep within some sentiment that when exposed results in this betrayal.

So it is in LeCarre's latest novel, though the action is carried on by a new cast of characters. *The Little Drummer Girl* introduces us to agents of the Israeli Secret Service, though it's never called that and the agents go by several names. The Israelis are hunting a Palestinian terrorist who has been blowing up Israeli and other innocent citizens throughout West Germany. The terrorist's identity is unknown; no photographs of him exist. He works by means of intermediaries, mostly young women of the radical left, who serve as couriers and courtesans. Slowly, painstakingly, the Israeli agents work their way into this terrorist network.

To succeed, they need a double agent who can gain the confidence of the terrorists, penetrate their group, and come to know the shadowy figure at the center. Selected for the job, though she doesn't at first know it, is a young British actress starring in a touring company production of Shaw's *St. Joan*. Charlie (real name Charmian) has led a feckless life, contemptuous of her middle-class upbringing, attracted to revolutionary causes. Her commitment, however, is more to the rhetoric than to the revolution. She is a born mimic and is looking for something real to imitate. She perfectly suits the Israeli's needs. By an elaborate subterfuge (too elaborate to explain in detail here) they recruit and train her to perform in what Kurtz, the operation chief, calls the "theatre of the real."

**... they need a double agent who can gain the confidence of the terrorists, penetrate their group, and come to know the shadowy figure at the center**

Charlie's first assignment is to drive a Mercedes loaded with Russian plastic explosives across Yugoslavia to Austria. She then returns to her London flat to wait until the terrorists approach her. The approach is made and Charlie is taken first to Beirut where she meets the Palestinians, then to a refugee camp where she lives

among the displaced. LeCarre has been criticized in some reviews for portraying the Palestinians too sympathetically; such criticism, I think, misses the point. The Palestinian leaders are letting their people live an illusion, the belief that they have been deprived of their homeland by the "Zionist entity." This sentimental illusion prevents them from dealing with the political reality. Charlie admires the Palestinians, even

Saint-Gaudens -- Diana  
Second weathervane  
Madison Square Garden Tower



LeCarre does not ask us to see the "theatre of the real" as a political drama. Insofar as any political struggle is apparent in the novel, it assumes the form of illusion being grafted onto illusion. Politics comes down to radical clichés and revolutionary postures directed at national power. The terrorist bombings are inconsequential. The desire for a homeland is an illusion that can be affirmed or denied, for Israeli or Palestinian both, by those who have the power to draw arbitrary boundaries on a map. Consequently, for LeCarre, Middle East politics distills itself to the essence of the tragic stage -- retribution and revenge. The "theatre of the real" is a psychomachia, a war of minds.

Kurtz knows this, as his name suggests by its heart of darkness echo. (He arranges to have a key Palestinian operative held and interrogated in an apartment of Munich's Olympic Village.) Joseph, Charlie's agent runner, suspects the true nature of the conflict and is in conflict with himself about continued participation; he has to be drawn out of retirement for this one last assignment. Charlie lacks any sense of these darker motives. She has read Thoreau and fancies herself marching to a different drummer. Kurtz, however, knows her to be a drum to reverberate whatever sound is struck. For him, she is Charmian, the chameleon. Her middle-class background has been so featureless, to the extent that Charlie has invented a sordid family history for herself, that Kurtz knows he can fabricate an identity for Charlie that will feed her romantic illusions about herself. It will be an identity all her own which she need share with virtually no one. As she moves around London with her new identity, Charlie develops "an affectionate disrespect for the innocents around her who failed to see what was shoved under their noses every day. They are where I came from, she thought. They are me before I walked through the looking glass."

The "theatre of the real" is, finally, a place of no illusions. It is a stage of violent sex and violent death, both of which climax the novel. Illusions, regardless, are necessary to life, even though so many of them may ultimately be destructive. Charlie, unable to speak her lines in a revue titled the Bouquet of Comedy, exits the theatre on Joseph's arm. He has returned for her; "it seemed that he wanted her dead or alive." Even in our illusionless age, sentimental comedy may still be the best antidote to the "theatre of the real." We are condemned to betray ourselves.

Charles F. Angell  
Associate Professor of English