

**GREETINGS FROM CHESTERWOOD'S EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**



Photo: Cassandra Sohn

All of us at Chesterwood are extremely grateful for the encouragement and support of our generous donors and members throughout this past season. Following strict CDC, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and the National Trust for Historic Preservation's Covid-19 guidelines, we literally pitched a "welcome tent" in June and pivoted to an online, timed ticketing system per car. We offered a reduced admission fee and safely opened this historic artist-designed landscape as a place of inspiration and respite to the community-at-large during these uncertain times. Over the past few months, we have learned the importance of staying connected to all of you in a world that is becoming more virtual by the moment. We have also understood the importance of becoming a community resource as a *Site for Creativity* by partnering with local non-profits such as Berkshire Pulse, A Center for Dance and the Creative Arts, to provide outdoor space for their educational programs. I hope you will enjoy reading our new quarterly newsletter, highlighting our work as well as our administration of the Historic Artists' Home and Studios (HAHS) Program of the National Trust for Historic Preservation. Chesterwood is one of 44 homes and studios of artists across the country that are open to the public. The HAHS program aims to preserve the nation's legacy in the visual arts and inspire meaningful personal experiences at authentic creative places.

*Donna Hassler*

Warmest regards,  
Donna Hassler | dhassler@savingplaces.org

**CHESTERWOOD ADVISORY COUNCIL**

Michael F. Lynch, *Chair*  
Jan Gudmundson, Beth Henriques, Nancy Fernandez Mills, Terry Moor, Helga S. Orthofer, James Rosenstein

**HISTORIC ARTISTS' HOMES & STUDIOS: A PROGRAM OF THE NATIONAL TRUST FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION**

"A new [book] that arrived in the mail last week carried me across the U.S. on a tour so absorbing, I hardly noticed that the trip was made entirely by armchair. Valerie A. Balint's *Guide to Historic Artists' Homes & Studios* is the perfect book for art lovers dreaming of a post-pandemic journey across time and geography."  
- Charles Desmarais, *San Francisco Chronicle*

Twenty years ago, the National Trust for Historic Preservation, with lead support from the Henry Luce Foundation and the Jessie Ball DuPont Fund, created the Historic Artists' Homes and Studios (HAHS) network. Today, HAHS comprises 44 preserved artists' homes and studios throughout the country—all of them open to the public.

The recently published *Guide to Historic Artists' Homes & Studios* is the first book to highlight this network, conveying each artist's visual legacy and setting each site in the context of its architecture and landscape, which often were designed by the artists themselves. Chesterwood is not only a founding member of this network but also the administrative home of HAHS whose Senior Program Manager, Valerie Balint, authored the guidebook which has now received numerous rave reviews in national publications such as *Architectural Digest*, *Fine Art Connoisseur*, and *The Magazine Antiques* as well as in major newspapers such as *The Boston Globe*, *Houston Chronicle*, *San Francisco Chronicle* and *Wall Street Journal*.

"Many of us are spending a lot of time in our homes right now thinking about why we choose to inhabit our space in the way that we do, about what conditions we need to be inspired, creative, and productive in our work," Balint said in a recent interview with *Architectural Digest*. "When you think about studio spaces, that's the same thing. The book allows you to have a sense of what it means to choose to live and work in a place."

The guide takes you to the desert vistas of Georgia O'Keeffe's New Mexico ranch to Winslow Homer's studio on the rocky, windswept coast of southern Maine, and of course, to Chesterwood. You will find yourself immersed in these unique sites, you will feel creativity pouring out from the lavishly illustrated pages, and you will be inspired to visit every last one, someday.

Autographed copies of the *Guide to Historic Artists' Homes & Studios* are available at [www.chesterwood.org/books](http://www.chesterwood.org/books). A unique, beautiful holiday gift for art lovers and travelers!

Valerie Balint, Senior Program Manager  
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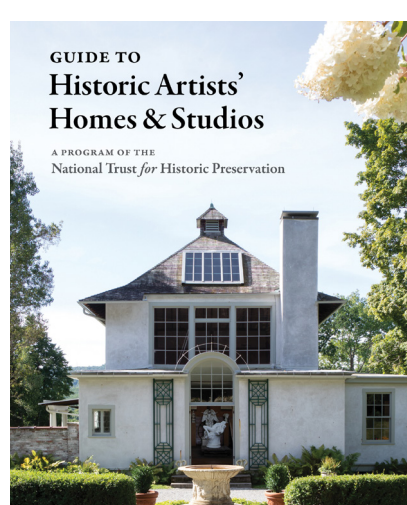


Photo: Don Freeman

Valerie Balint will present a live, online presentation and Q & A about the *Guide to Historic Artists' Homes & Studios* on Thursday, November 12th at 6:30 p.m. This free event is being presented in collaboration with the Stockbridge Library, Museum & Archives. The link can be found on the library's calendar at [www.stockbridgelibrary.org](http://www.stockbridgelibrary.org)

"Museums may represent the final destination of an artwork, but the artist's studio is its birthplace. Therefore, historic studios can offer an unparalleled experience of closeness to the creative act." - Barrymore Laurence Scherer, *Wall Street Journal*



**BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS PROJECTS**

The century-old, vine-covered, wrought iron **Studio Garden Arch** and stucco columns that form the threshold to the woodland walk was completely restored this past year with major support from the Town of Stockbridge Preservation Fund and the National Trust for Historic Preservation, in addition to donations from the Bud Race Garden Fund and Nancy Sheridan Kojima. The garden arch is an important landscape architectural element that French designed as a transition from the formal garden path to the informal woodland circle in the forest.

The historic **Ledges Trail**, which rises up in the woods to the north of the garden, was cleared, restored and made more accessible by the local youth organization, Greenagers. Support came from the Upper Housatonic Valley National Heritage Area and the Joe and Marge Grills Fund of the National Trust for Historic Preservation.

The **Daniel Chester French Study Collections Gallery**, which was made possible by a generous grant from the Henry Luce Foundation, displays approximately 150 works of art, including plaster, marble, and bronze sculpture, as well as paintings by Daniel Chester French and other artists. The Gallery has now been fully equipped with a complete environmental control system with a grant from the National Trust for Historic Preservation.

Gerry Blache, Senior Superintendent of Buildings and Grounds | gblache@savingplaces.org



Studio Garden Arch restoration

**SEASON IN REVIEW**

We are so grateful to our loyal seasonal guides (*and some new ones!*) who jumped into action at our new "welcome tent" as soon as government guidelines allowed us to open the property in July. While attendance was understandably down, thousands of visitors found us. Chesterwood was featured on many travel guides to the Berkshires as a safe and inspiring site. The Studio Garden became the perfect performance space for poetry readings, music, and dance. The expansive lawns became outdoor classrooms for the Berkshire Pulse dance center faculty to teach hundreds of students safely all season. The woodland walks remained energized and transformed by the creative sculptural work of Rick and Laura Brown, whose outdoor exhibition, *One Impulse from a Vernal Wood*, was held over from last season and continued to receive high praise from visitors.

This season also saw the launch of a new online Gift Shop which offers all of our Daniel Chester French reproductions as well as select books about the sculptor, including the full-length biography by Harold Holzer, *Monument Man*; the new children's book by Linda Booth Sweeney, with illustrations by local artist Shawn Fields, *Monument Maker*; and the new guidebook by the National Trust's Senior Program Manager, Valerie Balint, *Guide to Historic Artists' Homes & Studios*, all autographed. Chesterwood's website expanded its offerings as well this season with new sections highlighting resources to watch, listen to, and read.

Learn more at [www.chesterwood.org/experience](http://www.chesterwood.org/experience) | Shop at [www.chesterwood.org/shop](http://www.chesterwood.org/shop)

Margaret Cherin, Manager of Marketing & Business Operations | mcherin@savingplaces.org



Photo: Kari Giordano

Rick and Laura Brown speak to visitors in front of "Mother Tree" during the 2019 season.

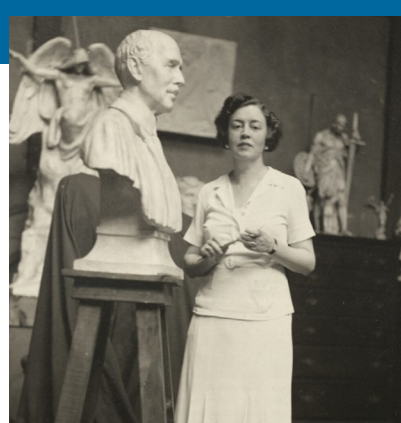
**CURATORIAL NEWS**

**Margaret French Cresson (1889-1973): Her Artistic Life & Legacy at Chesterwood**

As we focus more on virtual resources during this time, a planned exhibition was brought online through the collections portal of our parent organization, the National Trust for Historic Preservation. The digital exhibition celebrates the artistic life and legacy of Margaret French Cresson (1889-1973), the only child of Mary Adams French (1859-1939) and Daniel Chester French (1850-1931), who was the keeper of Chesterwood and ensured its preservation as an historic site. The exhibition features photographs of Cresson as she grew up at Chesterwood, from a young girl posing as a model for her father, to an artist working in the Studio alongside him, and later as owner of the property. The exhibition also includes examples of Cresson's sculpture which will eventually be exhibited throughout the Residence, Studio, and the Daniel Chester French Study Collections Gallery during the 2021 season.

The exhibition can be accessed at [www.chesterwood.org/margaret-french-cresson](http://www.chesterwood.org/margaret-french-cresson)

Dana Pilson, Curatorial Researcher | dpilson@savingplaces.org



Margaret French Cresson working in the Studio at Chesterwood, 1934



Your membership is important to us! [www.chesterwood.org/join](http://www.chesterwood.org/join)

