

Daniel Chester French's Summer Home, Studio, and Gardens: *A Site for Creativity* | The Pedestal Winter 2023

Greetings from the Executive Director



I am delighted to announce four new members to our growing **Chesterwood Advisory Council**: artist Rick Brown; psychiatrist and poet, Owen Lewis MD; art educator Karen Marshall; and business systems expert Karen Spies. We are thrilled to bring new talent and energy to the Council as we navigate the completion of the Residence renovation, plan new educational opportunities, and develop Chesterwood's expanding artist-in-residence program.

I am also excited to announce that our parent organization, the National Trust for Historic Preservation, has promoted our long-time Chesterwood colleague, Valerie Balint, (former intern, former curator, former Advisory Council Chair) to the position of **Director, Historic Artists' Homes and Studios** (HAHS), a program begun by the National Trust 20+ years ago. Over the past 6 years, as Senior Manager, Valerie has overseen a coalition of 55 (and growing) sites that were the homes and working studios of American artists. She recently announced the membership of 6 new sites into the program, elevating the stories of women, artists of color, and members of the LGBT+ community alongside more well-known male artists who have advanced the fields of fiber arts, abstract painting, and furniture design. Congratulations Valerie!

We kick off our spring season with a special curatorial collaboration with the American Federation of Arts: the launch of a new traveling exhibition that explores the intersecting careers of Daniel Chester French and Augustus Saint-Gaudens, arguably the two most prominent sculptors of the Gilded Age. "**Monuments and Myths: The America of Sculptors Augustus Saint-Gaudens and Daniel Chester French**" starts its nation-wide tour on May 30 at the Jule Collins Smith Museum of Fine Art at Auburn University, Auburn, AL and travels to Nashville, TN, and Doylestown, PA. This ground-breaking exhibition will include over 35 works from Chesterwood's collection. The accompanying catalogue will include an essay by Chesterwood Director Emerita, Donna Hassler, and Chesterwood Curatorial Researcher and Collections Coordinator, Dana Pilson. The catalogue will be available in our gift shop this coming season.

I'm looking forward to sharing our 2023 season plans in the next newsletter – new exhibitions, artist residencies, and our 4th season of *Arts Alive!* programming.

All best wishes,

Margaret
Margaret Cherin

Interim Executive Director | mcherin@chesterwood.org

Welcome to our new Advisory Council members:



Rick Brown



Owen Lewis MD



Karen Marshall



Karen Spies

Curatorial News: Collections Cataloguing Project Update

With a grant from the Henry Moore Foundation (UK), over 50 works from Chesterwood's permanent collection were professionally photographed this past November. Not only will these photographs serve as a significant resource for researchers, but they will also be publicly available to view through a new online exhibition to be published in 2023, "*Daniel Chester French's Preliminary Models for Public Art*".

One of the highlights of the exhibition will be the magnificent plaster head of *Victory* that is on permanent display in the Chesterwood Studio. In 1918, architect Cass Gilbert asked Daniel Chester French to create an allegorical statue of *Victory* for the First Division Memorial near the White House in Washington, DC. French's final winged figure is perched high atop a column, brandishing an enormous flag in one hand and saluting with the other. Details of the bronze *Victory* are difficult to make out from seventy feet below, so French simplified the features of the face and enlarged the Roman-style helmet.

– Dana Pilson, Curatorial Researcher and Collections Coordinator



In process: "Photo studio" in the Studio with *Victory*, November 2022



Final photo of *Victory*, full-size plaster head, 1923, Gregory Cherin Photography



CHESTERWOOD

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The Milmore Memorial, bronze, 1889-93, Forest Hills Cemetery, Jamaica Plain, MA



At Home Activity



Young Dan French building a snow lion, illustration by Shawn Fields from Monument Maker: Daniel Chester French and the Lincoln Memorial, Linda Booth Sweeney, Tilbury House Publishers, 2019

Here's a fun at home winter activity for all ages! Bundle up and head outside to create your own animal-inspired snow sculpture just like Daniel Chester French did in his younger days while living in Concord, MA. (See description below) If you don't have snow where you live, or prefer to avoid the cold air altogether, pick up some air-dry clay and sculpt inside instead. Share your creations with us on social media!

"[Dan French's] brother Will came out of the front door, seized his younger brother's hand and exclaimed: 'Come out in the yard with me. I'm going to dig some lions out of that snowdrift.' Together they dug and piled and patted and heaved and by dinner time had carved two very presentable lions out of the snow, a mother lioness and her little cub. People coming home from church stopped to gaze appreciatively; quite a crowd gathered, and Mr. Longfellow, in a fur-lined coat and carrying a gold-headed cane, leaned over the fence and expressed his admiration. . . Dan was filled with a secret sense of elation and excitement over it. . . and now he found there was something about making those figures that had fascinated him." *From Journey into Fame: The Life of Daniel Chester French by Margaret French Cresson, Harvard University Press, 1947*

Engaged over the holidays?



Photo: Leila Brewster Photography

We are currently booking the garden for weddings in 2024!

Schedule a tour with
Caren Kinne, Business
& Events Assistant,

413.298.2036 |
ckinne@chesterwood.org

More info at
chesterwood.org/weddings

Daniel Chester French *Out in the World*

"*The Sculpture of Daniel Chester French at Forest Hills Cemetery*" an illustrated talk with Dana Pilson, Curatorial Researcher and Collections Coordinator, Chesterwood. Saturday, April 15 at 2:00p.m. at Forest Hills Cemetery, Jamaica Plain, MA.

Hosted by the Jamaica Plain Historical Society. Free and open to the public. Light refreshments will be served.

In person and Zoom registration: www.jpshs.org/events

Highlights will include:

The Milmore Memorial, 1889-93

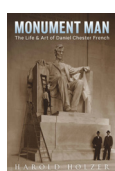
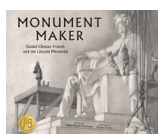
Clark Memorial (Kneeling Angels), 1894

George Robert White Memorial (Angel of Peace), 1898

Winter Shopping

All our Daniel Chester French reproductions continue to be available during the off-season through our online Gift Shop – items are delivered right to your door! We also have limited stock of our favorite books such as the definitive biography *Monument Man: The Life and Art of Daniel Chester French* by Harold Holzer; the best armchair travel guide ever *Guide to Historic Artists' Homes & Studios* by Valerie Balint; and the charming children's book *Monument Maker: Daniel Chester French and the Lincoln Memorial* by Linda Booth Sweeney with illustrations by Shawn Fields.

Order online at www.chesterwood.org/books



Creative Retreats at the Meadowlark



Creative Retreats are being offered this season at the 2-bedroom Meadowlark cottage, French's "little studio", built in 1905 in the lower woods at Chesterwood. Available from July - September (2 - 4 weeks/ \$1000 week) Private Studio with AC/industrial sink is available for an additional fee.

Please send all inquiries to chesterwood@savingplaces.org