



**Pierre-Auguste Renoir – *Venus Victorious*
-At a Glance-**

Venus Victorious, 1915-1916, Bronze
Pierre-Auguste Renoir, French, 1841-1919
Saint Louis Art Museum, Bequest of Curt Valentin, 186:1955
installed on June 9, 2009
in Centennial Garden in Shaw Park
Clayton, Missouri

The City of Clayton and the Clayton Art Commission are pleased to announce the installation of the bronze sculpture *Venus Victorious* by Pierre-Auguste Renoir. The *Venus* was installed in Centennial Garden in Shaw Park. The sculpture is on loan to the City of Clayton from the Saint Louis Art Museum during the Museum's expansion. The loan provides a unique opportunity for collaboration. The Museum keeps works of art on display and introduces its collection to new audiences. The City of Clayton benefits by having a museum-quality work of art in its municipal park.

Artwork

The 6' tall bronze *Venus Victorious*, among Renoir's later works was created between 1915 and 1916. It depicts the goddess Venus holding the golden apple awarded to her by Paris for being, in his judgment, the most beautiful of the goddesses. In 1910, Renoir suffered a paralytic stroke; subsequently, the Venus figure was recreated in bronze with the help of an assistant, a young man named Richard Guino. With Guino's acting as an intermediary, Renoir created, among other works, *Standing Venus* and *Venus Victorious*.

Artist

Pierre-Auguste was born in Limoges, Haute-Vienne, France on February 25, 1841. He studied with other famous impressionists Alfred Sisley and Claude Monet in Paris. To study the work of other artists, he traveled to Algeria, Spain and Italy. Renoir's paintings are notable for their vibrant light and saturated color, most often focusing on people in intimate and candid compositions. The female nude was one of his primary subjects. The collaboration with Richard Guino resulted in the transposition of techniques, the *Venus* figure from Renoir's painting, *The Judgment of Paris*, becoming the figure in bronze known as *Venus Victorious*. In this way, the spirit of the painting is manifested in the spirit of the sculpture. A remarkable communion of spirit and sensitivity developed between the two artists. This collaboration lasted until 1918 and resulted in the creation of an ensemble of pieces. Renoir died on December 3, 1919 (aged 78) in Cagnes-sur-Mer, Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur, France.

Location

In Centennial Garden in Shaw Park between the swimming pool and the ice skating rink

**Installation
Date**

Sculpture installed June 9, 2009.

**Ownership/
Funding**

Owned by the Saint Louis Art Museum, a bequest of Curt Valentin. On loan to the City of Clayton during the Museum's expansion.

Process

The Centennial Garden site was created in 2001 for the installation of the sculpture *Five Rudders* by Alexander Calder. Washington University loaned the piece to the City of Clayton during the renovation of the University's Mildred Lane Kemper Art Museum. When the piece was returned to the University's Sculpture Garden in 2006, the Clayton Art Commission (CAC) began a search for a replacement for the Calder.

The City and Museum have had a long and successful relationship with the acquisition of the Carl Milles sculpture *Folke Fylbyter in 1996*, which is on long-term loan to the City of Clayton from the Saint Louis Art Museum. The CAC subsequently approached the Saint Louis Art Museum for another work. The Museum offered to loan the City Renoir's *Venus Victorious* during the Museum's expansion. The CAC welcomed the opportunity to have this renowned artwork on view in Centennial Garden. At its April 14, 2009 meeting, the Clayton Board of Aldermen approved the loan agreement with the Saint Louis Art Museum.

About the Clayton Art Commission

The mission of the Clayton Art Commission is to help ensure that public art will become an integral part of the City's future development and to enhance Clayton's public spaces with high-caliber art in order to promote cultural, civic, aesthetic and economic vitality.

About the Saint Louis Art Museum

The Saint Louis Art Museum is one of the nation's leading comprehensive art museums with collections that include works of art of exceptional quality from virtually every culture and time period. Areas of notable depth include Oceanic art, pre-Columbian art, ancient Chinese bronzes and European and American art of the late 19th and 20th centuries, with particular strength in 20th-century German art. The Museum offers a full range of exhibitions and educational programming generated independently and in collaboration with local, national and international partners.