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The Prize Winning Medallion Awarded at the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition, Chicago, IL.

1893 World's Columbian Exposition (aka: Chicago World's Fair) official contest winners medallion in fine condition. (see complete history below.) Officially awarded in Bronze only and measures: Diameter: 3" (76mm) - Thickness: 0.2" (5.5mm) - Weight: 7.2 ounces (205 grams).

The 1893 World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago was a commemoration of the Four Hundredth Anniversary of Christopher Columbus' landing in the New World in 1492.

The front (obverse) designed by Augustus Saint-Gaudens (Sculptor) reads:

Christopher Columbus

Oct. XII, MCCCCXCII (1492)

Artist Signature: Augustus Saint-Gaudens Fecit



World's Columbian Exposition, Chicago, 1893

FRONT OF AWARD



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In the background are portions of a ship, an unfurled banner, and three male figures. In the upper right, in the distance, is a symbolic device of ships passing the Pillars of Hercules and the text inscription.

NOTE: The small hooded figure to the right of Columbus is believed to be the only known self-portrait of Augustus Saint-Gaudens.

The back (reverse) designed by Charles F. Baber (Mint Engraver) Reads:

World's Columbian Exposition in Commemoration of the Four Hundredth Anniversary of the Landing of Columbus. MDCCCXCII (1892) - MDCCCXCIII (1893)

Artist Signature: C. E. Barber Fecit



World's Columbian Exposition, Chicago, 1893

BACK OF AWARD

The medallions were struck by the Scovill Manufacturing Company, Waterbury, Connecticut.

MINTAGE: 400-600 known (References: Eglit 90; Baxter 87; Marqusee 348; Jaeger & Brown 64/53; Tolles p.135; and Weiss BW549.)



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1893 WORLD'S FAIR CONTEST AWARDS HISTORY

The 1893 World's Fair organizers decided to judge the contest prizes a little differently. Instead of competing directly against each other, the exhibitors, in all categories, were judged against a list of criteria that represented a standard of excellence for that category.

For example, the beer exhibitions. The judges were instructed to score each brew on purity, color, and flavor and assign a score between 0 and 100. All beers that scored an 80 or higher would be awarded a bronze Augustus Saint-Gaudens medallion and a parchment certificate. Things didn't exactly work out that way once the exposition opened. The beer judges decided to come up with their own scoring system with ranked prizes awarded based on numerical scores in categories of their own creation. The brewers were left to assume that whoever ended the fair with the highest score "won", never mind that there was, officially, no grand prize and that each medal was bronze and were identically the same as all the other prize medallions given out.

"Awards are designed to indicate some independent and essential excellence in the article exhibited, and as an evidence of advancement in the state of the art represented by it. They will be granted, upon specific points of excellence or advancement, formulated in words by a Board of Judges or Examiners, who will be competent experts; and the evidence of such awards will be parchment certificates, accompanied by bronze medals. Such awards will constitute an enduring, historical record of development and progress, and at the same time afford exhibitors lasting mementoes of their success."

SOURCE: ["After Four Centuries the World's Fair. The Discovery of America to be commemorated by an International Exposition. Chicago, ILL., U.S.A. 1893"](#) – Published by: Department of Publicity and Promotion. World's Columbian Exposition, Chicago, 1891.

THERE WERE NO GOLD, SILVER, OR ANY TYPE OF RIBBONS (blue or otherwise) OFFICIALLY GIVEN TO CONTESTANTS AT THE 1893 WORLD'S FAIR IN CHICAGO.



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NOTE:

Saint-Gaudens' design for the reverse of this medal was not used, despite the sculptor's eventual willingness to modify it. It was rejected by the United States Senate Quadro-Centennial Committee because the premature circulation of a photograph fostered criticism of the youth's nudity. Saint-Gaudens attempted various modifications but ultimately refused to alter his design, and solicited public support for his cause.

The art world supported him against the committee action, but to no avail. Saint-Gaudens made a model which eliminated the figure altogether, retaining only the inscription. This last model was the one adapted by Mint engraver Charles F. Barber for the final design. Saint-Gaudens' design of Columbus for the obverse, however, was retained. Louis Saint-Gaudens assisted his brother with this commission.



World's Columbian Exposition, Chicago, 1893

REJECTED BACK OF AWARD