

THE **PARKS AND RECREATION** VISIT

No city takes to the summer sun like Chicago. Whether it's our award-winning gardens or our permanent collections, the Art Institute boasts a wide variety of landscapes to play or get lost in. Finding your summer inspiration just became a walk in the park.



SOUTH GARDEN

Fountain of the Great Lakes (1913) by Lorado Taft

First unveiled in 1913 on the museum's South Terrace, Lorado Taft's *Fountain of the Great Lakes* was the Ferguson Fund's first commissioned work. The fund was established in 1905 with the express purpose of embellishing Chicago's public spaces with enduring works of art. Taft produced this statuary fountain to honor the region's great natural resources. The five bronze female figures symbolize each of the five Great Lakes, with the fountain mirroring the lakes' tributary water flow, starting at Lake Superior and ending with Lake Ontario. In 1965, the fountain was relocated to the museum's South Garden to make way for the Morton Wing. It remains one of Taft's most popular works and a favorite spot to relax in our gardens.



GALLERY 136

Ball Court Panel (AD 700/800), Late Classic Maya

Competitive sports can be found the world over, but the Maya game depicted in this panel is perhaps one of the oldest in human history. Played with a heavy rubber ball, the goal of the game was to get the ball through the opponents' ring, fixed high up on the opposing wall, without using one's hands. Though also played for fun, the game was an important ritual in Maya life and was often used to settle disputes between communities as an alternative to war. These decisive matches were played for keeps and often ended with the leader of the losing team being killed. This sculptural panel, which was part of a royal ballcourt, depicts a captured ruler and a victorious warrior-king. It recalls the ancient epic, as told in the *Popul Vuh*, of two ball-playing demigods who defeat and kill the supernatural Lords of the Underworld.



GALLERY 236

Half Armor for Foot Tourney at the Barriers (1575/80), Northern Italian, Milan

During the 16th century, Italian armorers produced these highly specialized garnitures for noblemen, professional officers, and court bodyguards. This spectacular half armor, which belonged to the Spanish Marqués de Dos Aguas, was designed for use in foot tourneys but fitted with add-ons and removable pieces to make it suitable for other occasions. Combatants in a foot tourney traded alternate blows across a wooden barrier. Leg armor was not needed since striking below the barrier was forbidden. Whoever knocked their opponent to the ground or landed the most hits was declared the victor. The blemish just above the eye slit on the helmet of this armor is likely the result of a glancing blow.



GALLERY 221

The Interior of the Palm House on the Pfaueninsel Near Potsdam (1834) by Carl Blechen

King Friedrich Wilhelm III commissioned this portrait of the Palm House from Carl Blechen while he was a professor of landscape painting in Berlin. The conservatory building, completed only one year earlier, was designed to house a collection of palms that the naturalist Alexander von Humboldt had urged the king to purchase. For von Humboldt's money, palms were "the loftiest and noblest of vegetable forms." Blechen certainly casts them accordingly in rich, naturalistic detail, imbuing the enclosed building with an ethereal tropical atmosphere. Situated on Peacock Island near Pfaueninsel Castle, the rich variety of flora and architectural ornament made the Palm House a unique addition to the German cultural landscape. Blechen accentuates the exoticism of the location with dramatic use of light and the addition of a group of women dressed in gold-trimmed oriental silk. The Palm House was destroyed by fire in 1880, but the island remains today a popular tourist destination and nature reserve.



GALLERY 201

Lunch at the Restaurant Fournaise (The Rowers' Lunch) (1875) by Pierre-Auguste Renoir

In the 19th century, with the rise of easy and affordable train transportation, middle-class Parisian weekenders began flocking to small villages along the Seine River, transforming them into bustling vacation spots. The Maison Fournaise of Chatou, a town just west of Paris, was particularly popular among the Impressionist painters and frequented by the likes of Monet, Caillebotte, and Degas. Renoir in particular knew the Fournaise family well, painted their portraits, and often spent his time at the restaurant and terrace depicted in this airy composition. The boater's relaxed posture and the fruit and wine on the table indicate lunch is over. Renoir intentionally leaves the narrative interchange between the diners unclear, letting his loose brushwork evoke the fuzzy satiety that follows a good meal, abundant wine, and a hard row.



BROOKS MCCORMICK COURT

Chicago Stock Exchange Building Entrance Arch (1893-94) by Dankmar Adler and Louis Sullivan

The Art Institute boasts the world's largest collections of architectural fragments from works by Adler & Sullivan. One of the highlights of the collection is this terracotta entrance arch from the Chicago Stock Exchange Building. Completed in 1894, the Stock Exchange stood at the southwest corner of LaSalle and Washington. This architectural masterpiece was razed in 1972, despite important efforts by students, architects, and preservationists to save the building. Photographer and activist Richard Nickel gave the ultimate sacrifice when he was killed while attempting to save fragments of the Stock Exchange interior during the course of demolition. The Art Institute keeps this historic building alive with the original entrance arch near Columbus Drive in our award-winning East Garden, as well as the permanent installation of the reconstructed Stock Exchange Trading Room in the museum's East Wing.

Looking for more summer fun?

Stop in to any of our summer-themed Artist's Studio classes in the Ryan Education Center and create your own interpretation inspired by the landscapes in the Art Institute's collection. These drop-in classes are free with museum admission and run from June 3 to June 26. Call (312) 443-3051 for more information.