The story of this visitor favorite began in the early 1970s when French artist Marc Chagall came to Chicago for work related to his mosaic, *The Four Seasons*, installed outside Chase Tower. In response to the city’s enthusiasm for his work and the Art Institute’s great support, the artist offered to create a set of stained-glass windows for the museum. After three years of planning, Chagall determined that the windows would commemorate America’s bicentennial, celebrating the country as a place of cultural and religious freedom and detailing the arts of music, painting, literature, theater, and dance. Because of his admiration for Chicago and its strong commitment to public art, Chagall chose to dedicate the work to Mayor Richard J. Daley, a great supporter of public art projects.

Reconstructed at the Art Institute in 1977 after its demolition in 1971–1972, the Chicago Stock Exchange Trading Room was designed by Adler and Sullivan to be both aesthetically pleasing and useful for commerce and trade. Called the “Father of the Skyscraper,” Sullivan adorned Chicago’s skyline with buildings featuring opulent and organic ornamentation. This room combines elements of styles ranging from the decorative borders of Celtic manuscripts to the luxuriance of Art Nouveau, with a particularly complex use of stenciling—the elaborate, leaf-like designs use 57 different colors. You’ll also want to check out the Stock Exchange’s original entrance arch, located in Brooks McCormick Court on the east corner of the Modern Wing.

While renowned for her images of the American Southwest, Georgia O’Keeffe had many ties to our fair city, particularly to the Art Institute. She studied at the School of the Art Institute from 1905 to 1906, and in 1943 the museum presented her first major retrospective, purchasing the painting *Black Cross* at the close of the show. O’Keeffe reciprocated with several gifts of her work, and after the death of her husband, the photographer and art dealer Alfred Stieglitz, she gave the museum his extraordinary collection, which added over 400 objects to the museum’s 20th-century American holdings. This work, another gift from the artist, is the ultimate painting in a series in which O’Keeffe captured her in-flight experiences traveling all over the world. Ironically, the massive size of the work has prevented it from doing much traveling itself, keeping it right here for us to enjoy in Chicago.
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**GALLERY 240**

*A Sunday on La Grande Jatte*—1884 (1884–86) by Georges Seurat

Georges Seurat’s world-famous masterpiece *A Sunday on La Grande Jatte*—1884 is perhaps the most beloved work in the Art Institute. With its color theory, mesmerizing pointillist technique developed by Seurat himself, and enigmatic characters and relationships, this image of fashionable Parisians enjoying a day of leisure has long fascinated scholars and visitors alike. The work received even further attention when the high schoolers of [*Ferris Bueller’s Day Off*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ferris_Bueller%27s_Day_Off) made a stop at the Art Institute during their day of hooky-playing adventures in Chicago. Ferris’s friend Cameron becomes hypnotized by the little girl in white at the center of the work, seeing her clearly from afar but having her dissolve into dots the closer he looks. (Travel back to 1986 with the movie’s museum scene on YouTube, and zoom into the last dot of this renowned masterpiece on the Google Art Project.)

**GALLERY 211**

*The Assumption of the Virgin* (1577–79) by Domenikos Theotokopoulos, called El Greco

Hard to believe, but when the Art Institute acquired this work in 1906, no one else was vying for it. The gigantic painting was the centerpiece of El Greco’s first major commission in Spain, but the Crete-born artist had become rather obscure in the decades following his initial success. When the painting reemerged in Paris in 1904, however, avant-garde artists, including a young Picasso and American Impressionist Mary Cassatt, became quite enthusiastic about it. Cassatt, in fact, petitioned various American museums to purchase the work, and after 19 months of deliberation, the Art Institute agreed. In time, the work regained its original lauded status, all the while continuing to win notable admirers. Ernest Hemingway, who visited the museum often as a boy, recalled *The Assumption* inspiring him to write as boldly as El Greco painted.

**GALLERY 200**

*Architectural Fragments*

Home to the first skyscraper and the White City of the 1893 World’s Columbian Exposition, Chicago has been the center of American architecture since the late 19th century. The skyline still teems with buildings designed by such legends as Dankmar Adler, Daniel Burnham, and Louis Sullivan, but this gallery at the top of the Grand Staircase houses treasures from these architects’ great buildings that are no longer standing. The graceful fragments include Burnham’s intricate ironwork, Sullivan’s iconic organic ornamentation, and Frank Lloyd Wright’s geometric, nature-inspired stained glass windows. Chicago’s storied past comes alive!

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