

Daniel Chester French's Summer Home, Studio and Gardens: *A Site for Creativity* | The Pedestal Spring 2021

Greetings from Chesterwood's Executive Director



Photo: Cassandra Sobn

The promise of spring is everywhere, and we look forward to welcoming you back to Daniel Chester French's artists' retreat for tours beginning **Saturday, May 15th**. When you visit this season, you will experience a freshly renovated, opened-up space in the Barn Gallery Visitor's Center. We are delighted to welcome the well-established Lenox-based **4ForArt** gallery in residence this season in the Woodshed facility behind the Barn, where regional and international contemporary art and crafts will be on exhibit and for sale all season. On **Sunday, May 30th** we will kick off *Arts Alive at Chesterwood*, a series of outdoor dance, music, and readings, thanks to the inspired and thoughtful planning of our newly formed Arts Committee. If you

come early to the performances starting in July, you will also have the opportunity to view Chesterwood's dynamic outdoor exhibition: *Tipping the Balance: Contemporary Sculpture by John Van Alstine*. Van Alstine's sculpture defies gravity in its juxtaposition of natural and man-made forms.

I hope you will join us with friends and family as often as you can in the months ahead as we gather and celebrate creativity set against the unique backdrop of the historic buildings, landscape, and gardens of Chesterwood.

Warmest regards,

Donna Hassler | dbassler@savingplaces.org

43rd Annual Contemporary Sculpture at Chesterwood July 10 – October 25, 2021

When you visit Chesterwood in mid-June, you will see sculptor John Van Alstine and crew installing his monumental sculpture throughout the grounds. Van Alstine's abstract sculptures, forged out of steel and stone, are a complex synergy between natural forces and man-made materials. The artist draws on ancient mythology, celestial navigation, tools, human figures, urban forms, and industrial shards to give meaning to his vision in three dimensions. *Tipping the Balance: Contemporary Sculpture by John Van Alstine* is guest-curated by Caroline M. Welsh, art and museum consultant, and director emerita of the Adirondak Experience, the Museum on Blue Mountain Lake (formerly the Adirondak Museum.)

Born in upstate New York in 1952, John Van Alstine grew up in the southern Adirondacks. After attending St. Lawrence University, Kent State University (BFA 1974), and Cornell University (MFA 1976), he joined the faculty at the University of Wyoming, Laramie, and later the University of Maryland, College Park, to teach drawing and sculpture. In 1986, Van Alstine left teaching and moved to New York City to pursue studio work full-time. The following year, he purchased a 19th century lumberyard on the banks of the Sacandaga River in the hamlet of Wells, New York and returned to the Adirondacks where he now lives and works in the restored historic structures, which he adapted for his studio, gallery, residence, and sculpture park.

John Van Alstine's work may be familiar to many of you who have visited Chesterwood's outdoor sculpture exhibitions over the years.

His work was recently in the 2018 exhibition: *Contemporary Sculpture at Chesterwood: 40 YRS*. Van Alstine's sculpture can be found as far away as Beijing, China, as well as in major US museum collections, including the Carnegie Museum of Art, the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, the Smithsonian's American Art Museum, the Phillips Collection, the Albany Institute of History and Art, the Johnson Museum of Art at Cornell University, and Grounds for Sculpture, an outdoor sculpture park in Hamilton, NJ, as well as numerous private collections world-wide.



Sisyphbean Circle
8-14-17, 2017
Granite/galvanized and powder coated steel
49"h x 53"w x 16"d

Tipping the Balance: Contemporary Sculpture by John Van Alstine is underwritten with lead support from Chet and Karen Opalka, with additional support from the Artist Book Foundation, Murray Bring and Kate Delaney, Les and Suzanne Carter, Ellen-Deane Cummins, Kenneth Foon, Lillian Heller Sculpture Endowment, James Gold, Larry and Louise Marwill, Annette Merle Smith, and Jeffrey Sellon and Marilyn Burns

Sculpture Show Opening Weekend Events, July 9-10

Preview Exhibition Reception & Artist's talk: Friday, July 9, 5-7pm, *free*
John Van Alstine will be interviewed about his sculptural career by guest curator, Caroline M. Welsh. Sponsored by the Artist Book Foundation.

Artist's walking tour with guest curator for Chesterwood Members and Exhibition Sponsors: Saturday, July 10, 11am, *free*

Special Outdoor Performance by the Ellen Sinopoli Dance Company with guest cellist, Ashley Bathgate: Saturday, July 10, 2pm and 4pm performances. *\$35 (\$25 Chesterwood members).*

Special Guided Sculpture Tours: 1st Fridays starting August 6th at 3pm
Registration and tickets www.chesterwood.org/calendar



April daffodils

Curatorial News

With support from the National Trust for Historic Preservation's "Where Women Made History" campaign, a new scholarly article for **Fine Art Connoisseur**, and an online exhibition that will be featured on the National Trust's virtual collections portal, were developed this past winter to explore the personal and professional relationship between Daniel Chester French and Evelyn Beatrice Longman, his only female studio assistant. Drawing on the resources in the Chesterwood collections, as well as the historic photographs collection in the Chesterwood Archives at Chapin Library, Williams College, the story of how the sculptors collaborated and relied upon one another comes to light. French helped the highly talented Longman gain commissions and he relied heavily upon her astute opinions.



National Trust for Historic Preservation
Where Women Made History
Telling the full American story.



Evelyn Beatrice Longman and Daniel Chester French outside the studio at Chesterwood looking up at the sculpture, the Spirit of Life, on the railroad tracks, 1914.

Perhaps the most evocative evidence of their close relationship are the portraits that French and Longman sculpted of each other. His marble portrait of her portrays an attractive young woman with downcast eyes, with no indication of her métier as a sculptor. French gave the portrait to Longman as a wedding present, and it is now at Wellesley College's Davis Museum. Two plaster versions are at Chesterwood: one on a shelf in the Studio and the other installed in the Daniel Chester French Study Collection Gallery. Longman also modeled a relief portrait of French. At first, he protested: "Why spend your strength upon rendering me immortal?" he wrote her in 1924, "Keep it for better things." The resulting work, which is now in the National Portrait Gallery, includes a profile portrait of French among bas-relief renderings of some of his greatest works, including *Abraham Lincoln*, the *Minute Man*, and the *Melvin and Milmore Memorials*.

Both the article and exhibition will be accessible through Chesterwood's website.

Dana Pilson,
Curatorial Researcher
dpilson@savingplaces.org



Daniel Chester French,
Portrait of Evelyn Beatrice Longman, 1918
Marble, on a marble plinth with gold leaf
21 1/4 x 7 1/4 x 7 1/8 in
Davis Museum at Wellesley College, Wellesley, MA

"Write it large on the wall!"

The Sculptors Evelyn Beatrice Longman and Daniel Chester French, by Dana Pilson, will be published in *Fine Art Connoisseur*, in June 2021.

Season 2021: Arts Alive at Chesterwood

Pack a picnic and join us on the lawn for a new Saturday afternoon series of one hour outdoor programs that will showcase talented artists in music, dance, and the literary arts. **Arts Alive** at Chesterwood is designed to be a resource for our community with a low-ticket price and free admission for those under 18.

Complete program schedule and tickets at www.chesterwood.org/calendar or 413-298-2023 (*Thurs-Mon 10-5*)

Music: Victoria Wolf Lewis & Ronny Feldman 5/30 | Julian Müller & Tamara Winston 6/5 | Gina Coleman & the Misty Blues Duo 8/7 | Rev Tor Trio 8/21 | Joe Rose Jazz Trio 9/4

Literary Readings: Dr. Owen Lewis 5/30 | Peter Gizzi & Abigail Wender 6/26 | Brendan Mathews & Nathan McClain 9/5

Dance: Berkshire Pulse 5/30 | Ellen Sinopoli Dance Company 7/10

Special Event: Lincoln scholar Howard Holzer presents *Lincoln's Favorite Shakespeare* with actor Rufus Collins 8/4

Art Classes in collaboration with IS183: Landscapes with Pastels | Drawing from Sculpture | Painting Studio

Arts Alive Committee 2021

Dr. Owen Lewis, *Chair*
Lucie Castaldo
Ronald Feldman
Bettina Montano
Elizabeth Morse
Nick Paleologos

Arts Alive Underwriters 2021 (*as of 5/1*)

Candace & Frederick Bienecke
Ellen and Scott Hand
Josephine L. Hassler
Paul & Maureen Hickey
Classical Tents & Party Goods
Gunnar & Janice Gudmundson
Anita Heller
Owen Lewis & Susan Ennis
Nancy & Mark Mills
David F. & Julie McCarthy
John Toole
Jay & Terry Wise