

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

Greetings from Chesterwood's Executive Director



Photo: Cassandra Sobn

In November of 1913, Daniel Chester French wrote to Mrs. Albert Miller, "There is nothing like being an artist, be it in paint or music or only mud." Most of us can remember playing with mud, the basic ingredient for modeling in clay, and we can relate to the feeling of this material in our hands. This quote has resonated with me for over a decade as I learn more about French and his artistic life at Chesterwood. Art is central to the mission of this historic artist's home and studio as we welcome a new sculptor this month, Gabrielle Trom, to live and work on the property. She is at Chesterwood through an exciting, affiliated residency program with the National Sculpture Society, a non-profit organization of which Daniel Chester French was a founding member and later President. Another artist, Jackie Fischer, is concluding her seasonal

residency in the Morris Center at Chesterwood, which was in collaboration with IS183 Art School in Stockbridge. She will converse with me about her creative practice on Saturday, October 9th at 3pm, while her new works will be on view in the Visitors Center at the Barn Gallery. Please join us for our upcoming programs this month and walk the grounds, once again, to see *Tipping the Balance: Contemporary Sculpture by John Van Alstine*. October is one of the best months to visit and enjoy nature's own colorful palette, especially the view of Monument Mountain from the Studio Piazza!

Warmest regards,



Donna Hassler | dhassler@savingplaces.org

Curatorial News – *Alma Mater* at Columbia University

Two works from Chesterwood's collection are on loan this fall to the Wallach Art Gallery at Columbia University in New York City. Daniel Chester French's *Maquette of Alma Mater* and *Head of Alma Mater* are included in the exhibition, "The Way We Remember: Fritz Koenig's Sphere, the Trauma of 9/11, and the Politics of Memory," on view from September 10 to November 14, 2021. The exhibition, which coincides with the twentieth anniversary of the September 11th, 2001 terrorist attacks, explores the vibrant popular and academic debate about the roles and functions of public monuments and addresses themes of memory, trauma, and the power of art to represent the past. Columbia's campus is dotted with permanent markers of memory, including French's bronze *Alma Mater* (1903) prominently situated upon

the Low Library steps. The statue continues to attract student attention in times of crisis and mourning, and has been the focus of student activism, protests, and memorials. The two works from Chesterwood are featured in the exhibition alongside objects from Columbia's collection that pertain to *Alma Mater*, such as a small-scale replica given to Columbia president Nicholas Murray Butler (1862-1947) on the occasion of the unveiling of the final bronze, as well as archival documents, and historical and contemporary photographs.

See <https://wallach.columbia.edu/exhibitions/way-we-remember> for more information about the exhibition located on Columbia's new Manhattanville campus.

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Left: Sketch model of *Alma Mater*, 1900; Columbia University, New York, NY
Plaster; 11-1/4 x 8-3/4 x 5-1/8 in. Bequest of Margaret French Cresson, NT 73.45.1436

Right: *Alma Mater*, 1903; Columbia University, New York, NY



CHESTERWOOD

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A members tour of the contemporary sculpture show

National Sculpture Society's Affiliated Artist Residency at Chesterwood



Gabrielle Trom (photo Andy Lay)

Sculptor Gabrielle Trom has been selected as the inaugural recipient of the National Sculpture Society's Dexter Jones Affiliated Artist Residency. The one-month residency, which begins on October 1, will offer Trom a place to live on the grounds in a building that served as French's "lower studio," now a cottage called the Meadowlark, and provide access to all the buildings, grounds, and collections. The award is designed to be given to an emerging sculptor working in bas-relief. The award is funded by an endowment in memory of Dexter Jones, past Fellow of the National Sculpture Society, with additional funding from Chesterwood's Lee M. Weiser Memorial Fund in support of a sculptor-in-residence.

Trom trained at The Art Academy in St. Paul, Minnesota and continued her studies in drawing, painting, and sculpture at Bethel University, also in St. Paul. In 2016, she began her education in the academic methods of figurative drawing and sculpture at the Barcelona Academy of Art and she returned to Spain in 2019 to complete her studies and teach. About her National Sculpture Society Affiliated Artist Residency at Chesterwood Trom remarked: "The opportunity to work in the former studio of Daniel Chester French is an honor and I eagerly look forward to spending many hours exploring the woods, landscape and views that inspired him as an artist."

Meet National Sculpture Society Affiliated Artist Gabrielle Trom! Relief Sculpture Demonstration in the Studio

October 9th & 10th from 1-4pm

Online Conversation with Gabrielle Trom and the NSS and Chesterwood Directors

October 13th at 5pm

Link to Zoom at www.nationalsculpture.com

Celebrate our Berkshire Artist in Residence, Jackie Fischer!

On Site Conversation with Jackie Fischer and Donna Hassler, Executive Director

October 9 at 3pm,
Visitors Center at the Barn Gallery

Exhibition

October 7-11, 10am to 5pm,
Visitors Center at the Barn Gallery

43rd Annual Contemporary Sculpture Show ends October 25th

This is the last month to walk the grounds and view the striking steel and stone sculptures in *Tipping the Balance: Contemporary Sculpture by John Van Alstine*. The eleven large works in this solo-artist show date from 1995 to 2019, and are sited throughout the landscape, enhanced by the distant views and forest backdrop at Chesterwood.

A more intimate exhibition, *Reflecting on 2020-21: New Bronze Sculpture by John Van Alstine*, is on view at the Visitors Center at the Barn Gallery. Faced with the pandemic shutdown Van Alstine used his time of retreat to reflect and isolate from the rest of the world. He worked uninterrupted and without distraction to create over 60 bronze and stone sculptures, an unprecedented output according to the artist. A selection of these works can be viewed during regular open hours, from 10am to 5pm, Thursdays through Mondays. A portion of all art sales goes to Chesterwood.



My sculpture operates on many levels and is open to a variety of interpretations. I believe its power is generated by the juxtaposition of impure found objects, layers of association, symbolism, and narrative.

—John Van Alstine

John Van Alstine, *Sisyphean Circle (copperwebbe)*, 2019; granite; galvanized and powder coated steel

Members always receive free admission to the grounds, Barn Gallery and Studio at Chesterwood!

Non-Members Grounds-only passes are \$10 per person; \$5 for young adults/students; and free for children under 13.

Arts Alive! at Chesterwood this season was a huge success! We are grateful to all the musicians, dancers, authors and actors who energized the landscape and gardens with their performances. The eight *Arts Alive!* programs were attended by over 400 people and raised over \$20,000 through sponsorships and ticket sales.

Lead sponsorship was provided by Candace and Rick Beinecke, Scott and Ellen Hand, Josephine Hassler, Paul and Maureen Hickey, Hans and Kate Morris, Roberta Silman and the Tryon Family Foundation. A very special thanks goes to Dr. Owen Lewis for chairing the 2021 Arts Committee.