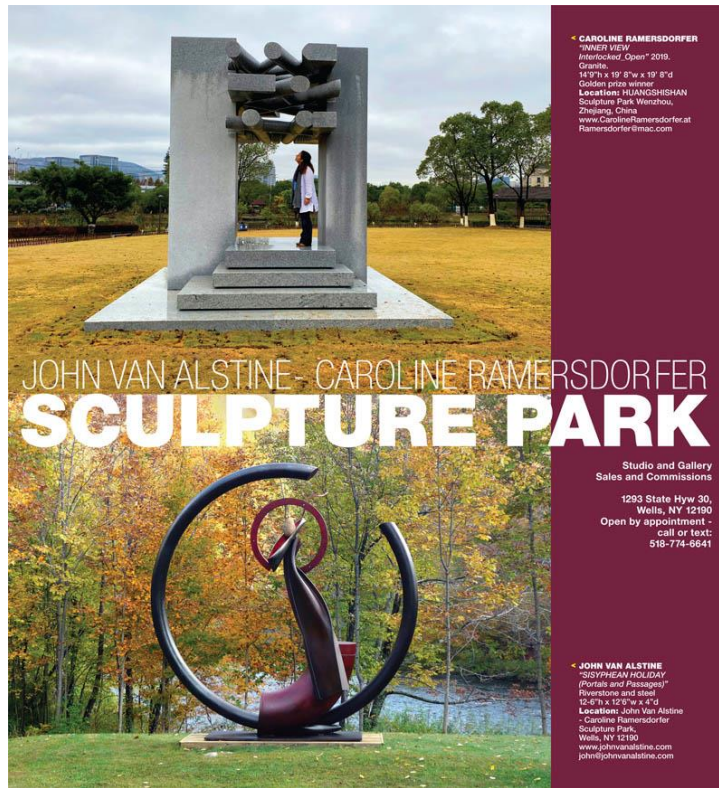


## SELF GUIDED TOUR INFO



**The Adirondack-Sacandaga River Sculpture Park** is a artist designed park featuring the work of internationally recognized sculptors [John Van Alstine](#) and [Caroline Ramersdorfer](#). The 8 acre parcel is nestled along the banks of the historic Sacandaga River, in the quaint hamlet of Wells, NY located in south central section of the Adirondack State Park. The grounds, once part of a 19th century wood products mill, are wonderfully landscaped showcasing an ongoing, changing exhibition of both sculptors, whose works are held in many national and international collections including of the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Smithsonian Institution, City of Beijing, and the City of Zhengzhou, China

Van Alstine's work is also currently on exhibit at many other parks and gardens including the DeCordova Museum and Sculpture Garden, in Lincoln, Mass., Grounds for Sculpture, Hamilton, NJ, The Olympic Garden in Beijing, China, Tsinghua University Sculpture Garden, Beijing, China and the garden at the Gulbenkian Foundation Collection, Lisbon, Portugal among others.

Ramersdorfer's work can be seen in the Eda Garden Museum, Yokohama, Tokyo; Artothek, Vienna, Austria; Abu Dhabi, UAE; Ordos City, Inner Mongolia, China; Urumqi, China; Cairo, Egypt; Hualien County Sculpture Museum, Taiwan; Tsinghua University Campus, Beijing, China; Robert T. Webb Sculpture Garden, Dalton GA and many more.

**All works are for sale – if interested please inquire for more information:**

1.



"SI

**SISYPHEAN HOLIDAY (Portals and Passages)" 12-6"h x12'6"w x4"d**

[http://www.johnvanalstine.com/Wells\\_Garden.htm](http://www.johnvanalstine.com/Wells_Garden.htm)

This dynamic new work is an extension of the recent "SISYPHEAN CIRCLE SERIES" (2005-2009) which examines parallels between the Greek mythological character Sisyphus and the plight of the artist.

As we know from mythology because of a lifetime of transgressions when Sisyphus reached the underworld he was forced as punishment to roll a large stone up a steep hill, only to have it tumble back after reaching the top. This toil lasts all eternity and can be seen as a perfect metaphor for the creative process and life in general especially applicable to those, like myself, that use stone as a primary material.

However, to view the creative process (and life) simply as toil or a punishment is obviously too narrow and negative. I prefer to take the view presented by Albert Camus, the French existentialist in his essay *The Myth of Sisyphus*. where he uses the myth to illustrate the idea that reaching one's final destination is not always the most important. If one "reconsiders Sisyphus" as suggested, the struggle or journey reveals itself as ultimately the most meaningful - an idea that I, and many others, believe is central to the creative process and more broadly to life in general.

After completing over 30 sculptures in the "Sisyphus Circle Series", a new series has developed - *SISYPHEAN HOLIDAY SERIES*. These new works are presented in a light hearted, "tongue in cheek" way that suggests giving Sisyphus (and me) a break or "holiday". Here the "Sisyphus Stone" is placed in a form similar to an Adirondack guide boat or canoe which gives the sculpture a playful and local summer twist.



2.

S-92-22 *Sledge*, 1992, granite/steel, 30”h x64”w x42”d (JVA Wells)  
<http://www.johnvanalstine.com/docs/Sledge.htm>

John Van Alstine

*In “Sledge” I wanted to pay homage to the “stone boats” or “sledges” that farmers used in pre-industrial America to drag stones from their field to build those impressive stone walls that thread through the new England landscape. Here the bed of the sled and its cargo were designed to be one in the same, the single large flat piece of granite acts simultaneously as both. There is something important about this union. Perhaps it’s because it presents a “oneness” with the material, tool and intent.*





3. **John Van Alstine**

***Sisyphean Circle (tank top)*, 2018**, riverstone/stainless/galvanized and powder-coated steel, 117”h x75”w x30”d [http://www.johnvanalstine.com/docs/SisypheanCircle\\_tanktop\\_T-18-11.htm](http://www.johnvanalstine.com/docs/SisypheanCircle_tanktop_T-18-11.htm)

*In the Sisyphean Circle series, the formal arrangement of the stone and steel elements suggest a figure frozen in the act of prying or pushing a stone. This struggle parallels that of the mythological Sisyphus who was cast to a life of perpetual labor pushing a stone to the top of a mountain only to have it roll back down. In many ways this series is a self-portrait as I am continually (and often literally) pushing stones to a creative peak and once reached, compelled to start again on a new work.*

*However portraying the creative process simply as “endless toil” is undeniably negative and I prefer to view the myth and metaphor through the lens of French existentialist Albert Camus. In his essay *The Myth of Sisyphus*, he points out that the idea of reaching ones final destination is not always the most important. In fact if one “reconsiders Sisyphus” as Camus suggests, the struggle or journey reveals itself as ultimately the most meaningful. As in life, this notion is at the core of the creative process where the act of making triumphs over the object or final product.*

*The lower element of this piece is a section of an aeronautical fuel tank left after I removed the pointed end to use in one of my “Chalice” sculptures. It simultaneously lifts and anchors the thin whimsical upper elements. The sculpture is somewhat of a departure from my usual “style” and was partially influenced by the Spanish surrealist Joan Miro’s outdoor sculpture I had recently seen at Foundation Maeght in southern France.*



airplane fuel tank aboard artist’s truck 2018



4. "TETHER (Boy's Toys)" 1995; granite/alum./steel, 16'h x14'w x10'd John Van Alstine

**TETHER (Boy's Toys) 1995**, Granite/steel/aluminum, 16'h x 14'w x 10'd  
[http://www.johnvanalstine.com/docs/garden/grounds\\_02/lg\\_img\\_tether.htm](http://www.johnvanalstine.com/docs/garden/grounds_02/lg_img_tether.htm)

*This piece was born from two primary influences: my youthful infatuation with farmer's mailboxes observed along country roads magically dancing atop a welded chain and my first scuba trip where, from underwater, I experienced vessels wafting above on their anchor chains. At the time my studio was on the west bank of the Hudson in Jersey City and full of objects collected from nearby marine salvage yards - large anchors, chain, cleats, buoys, pontoons.*

***Tether (Boy's Toys)***, an unlikely stew of material and ideas, was conceived to simulate the experience of being underwater observing a floating **tethered** vessel. The sub-title, which came about while the work was in process, refers to the large phallic form and alludes to the things that often get the masculine gender into trouble: cigars, missiles, penises.



5.

PIQUE A TERRE VIII, 1999, bronze / granite 41" h x 59" w x 31' d

John Van Alstine

***Pique à Terre*** series. *Pique à terre* is a term from classical French ballet for a pose with one toe touching the ground, the other foot firmly planted, and a sweeping arm gesture. Once you are aware of the title, when you see the piece the connection is clear. I am in a sense choreographing these works, getting a heavy weight off the ground and making it dance—taking what is often seen as a negative, the fact that stone is damn heavy and a big hassle to move around, and turning it into a positive. It is this transition that helps give these pieces their magic.





6. John Van Alstine "SISYPHEAN CIRCLE LXIV" 2015, slate/galvanized and powder coated steel,,65"h x64"w x16"d (165 x 162 x 40 cm)

**"SISYPHEAN CIRCLE SERIES" (2005-present) which examines parallels between the Greek mythological character Sisyphus and the plight of the artist.**

As we know from mythology because of a lifetime of transgressions when Sisyphus reached the underworld he was forced as punishment to roll a large stone up a steep hill, only to have it tumble back after reaching the top. This toil lasts all eternity and can be seen as a perfect metaphor for the creative process and life in general especially applicable to those, like myself, that use stone as a primary material.

However, to view the creative process (and life) simply as toil or a punishment is obviously too narrow and negative. I prefer to take the view presented by Albert Camus, the French existentialist in his essay *The Myth of Sisyphus*. where he uses the myth to illustrate the idea that reaching ones final destination is not always the most important. If one "reconsiders Sisyphus" as suggested, the struggle or journey reveals itself as ultimately the most meaningful - an idea that I, and many others, believe is central to the creative process and more broadly to life in general

7.



**Hauch (Breathing ) 1996**  
**marble, 15 1/2 x 22 x 50 inches**  
**Caroline Ramersdorfer**

**Excerpt from the 2016 Opalka Gallery, Sage College, Albany, NY exhibition catalogue : *Gravity & Light* essay written by Federica Anichini**

The proliferation of surfaces creates new dimensions, providing fresh perspectives for the viewer. The visual, or physical, interaction between the observer and the sculpture produces a meaningful reaction, as the artistic creation allows the organic qualities hidden in the inorganic matter to emerge. As if affected by the living presence of the observer, the inert material of the sculpture morphs into vital tissues, and the piece is transfigured into an organism, exposed.

Ramersdorfer conveys this response in a language that is direct and immediate. *Breathing* (1996) (figure 4) illustrates how extracting and liberating vital components from the block of material is achieved, as Ramersdorfer brings the marble to life. It breathes, suggesting movement, as if the piece were responding to a puff of air. Or perhaps the marble is carved into a respiratory organ, what might resemble the gills of a breathing animal, extracting oxygen from water. The meaning is communicated simultaneously at the symbolic as well as at the literal level.

Further organic elements surface, including those composing a human body— cartilages and bones boldly emerge in *Inner View\_ To the Bone* (2005) (figure 5), polished by time, and alive. A microscopic view of the inside of a bone, made of alabaster, springs from the confined space to spill through its boundaries, growing over itself. The material appears altered by a generative force that illustrates the process of transformation at the foundation of life. In order to demonstrate the continuity of such process, Ramersdorfer lends a sense of incompleteness to the piece, which appears on the verge of excreting yet more shapes.





8. **John van Alstine**  
**ODALISQUE I, 1989, granite /steel, 81"h x98w x60'd**

This work was inspired by the famous reclining nude by Jean-Auguste-Dominique **INGRES** and my continuing interest in “breathing life into the heavy inanimate materials of stone and metal”



**Jean-Auguste-Dominique INGRES** (Montauban, 1780 - Paris, 1867), **La Grande Odalisque, 1814**

Ingres transposed the theme of the mythological nude, whose long tradition went back to the Renaissance, to an imaginary Orient. This work, his most famous nude, was commissioned by Caroline Murat, Napoleon's sister and the queen of Naples. Here, Ingres painted a nude with long, sinuous lines bearing little resemblance to anatomical reality, but rendered the details and texture of the fabrics with sharp precision. This work drew fierce criticism when it was displayed at the Salon of 1819.



9.  
**CORNUCOPIA WITH COLUMNS**  
1998, steel and granite, 11' 4" x 6'4" x 3' 7"

*Many of my works incorporate anvils, either real or cast. Anvils have the shape suggestive of a boat or vessel that implies journey, which interests me. But further, as a metal worker, the anvil is the place where I physically and conceptually forge things together; there is an art spirit that comes off the anvil. It's almost like an altar. I've titled many of these pieces **Ara**, which is Latin for altar. Also, to me the anvil is the quintessential heavy object, and to get it up in the air creates a wonderful sense of tension.*

The title "Cornucopia" refers to the horn shaped element in the lower part of the sculpture where the upper element "spill out". The connection to the "horn of plenty" reinforces my notion that art nourishes"





10.

**“Trilogy” 2006-7, marble from Vermont , steel, stainless steel, wire, 9x 13 x 17’  
Caroline Ramersdorfer**

**Excerpt from the 2016 Opalka Gallery, Sage College, Albany, NY exhibition catalogue : *Gravity & Light*  
essay written by Albert Ruetz**

The essential force field inherent in these works develops when, even as they extend into an architectural space, an internal architecture is simultaneously formed. A force field is also generated when internal voids appear, when lattice work divides the field of view into segments and new, transformed spatial perceptions arise from different lines of vision. The important components here are light, fullness, and emptiness.

They enable the sculpture to occupy its own space fully, to change the space around it and to make use of the ever-changing play of light and shadow, direct or indirect illumination and, consequently, the many variable colors of light.

The essential precondition is the positioning of the sculpture. Standing alone in space, without immediate reference to its surroundings, it is limited to its particular form and external impact. When set in a direct contextual relationship with architecture, in fact complementing it, a symbiosis is formed; architecture and sculpture are both transformed in the observer’s perception and acquire a new significance through their interplay.

Nature and architecture complement its appearance.





11.

### **Inner View\_Nexus\_Interlocked**

**2011, marble and stainless steel 8 1/2 x 4 x 5 1/2 feet**

**Caroline Ramersdorfer**

Excerpt from the 2016 Opalka Gallery, Sage College, Albany, NY exhibition catalogue : *Gravity & Light*  
written by Albert Ruetz "Trilogy"

Caroline Ramersdorfer's priority is to search out the deeper structures within the stone, to reveal, erode, lay bare, peel away — indeed — to break through the mass of material. She seeks the essentials: form, space, light. Light is in fact concealed within the stone, becoming ever more visible in varying intensities on and within the form. In the process of working the material, she uses light to create spaces. According to Ramersdorfer:

"It is the uncovering, laying bare the innermost core, where transparency allows light to appear, which is important to me"

The physical material—carved, fractured, sawn, rough, smoothed over, polished, shiny, matte—is given form and vitality by the light, the colors and structures within its surroundings, by shadows falling upon it and cast by it. Likewise, the site and the observer's line of vision, in both the immediate and the intellectual sense, their openness or limitations, are co-determinants of the visual experience.



12

**"SISYPHEAN CIRCLE 2015-III" 2015, slate/galvanized and powder coated steel,  
84"h x76"w x22"d (214 x 193 x 56cm)**

**John Van Alstine**

**(see #6 – Sisyphus Circle statement)**





13.

John van Alstine

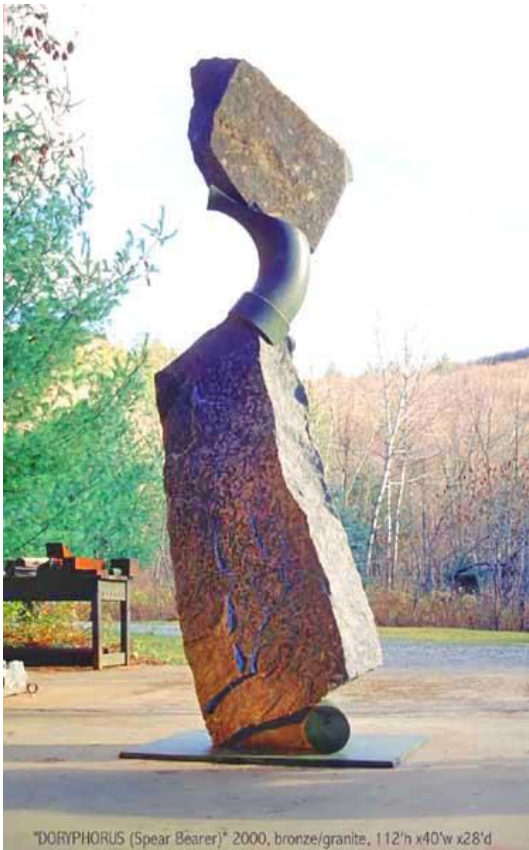
**CHARON'S STEEL STYX PASSAGE**  
1996, granite / steel, 17'4" h x 20' l x 6' w

Granite/steel, 17'4" h x 20' l x 6' w

[http://www.johnvanalstine.com/docs/garden/grounds\\_02/lg\\_img\\_gar\\_charon.htm](http://www.johnvanalstine.com/docs/garden/grounds_02/lg_img_gar_charon.htm)

*Charon, the mythical ferryman, is charged with transporting the deceased across the River Styx to the underworld. The vessel - my attempt to simulate an Adirondack like guide boat in steel – with its out-stretched oar, uninhibited trailing “rope” and attached coin to “pay passage”- is poised atop the long black pole or stick/styx. It is aiming for its destination, the large cleat below (under) the globe like, metal buoy. The piece, contrary to perhaps its first impression is not about death or dying, but rather quite the opposite. The “final” journey is portrayed as a wild almost carnival-like passage, reminding us of the importance of each day and the necessity to live each one fully.*



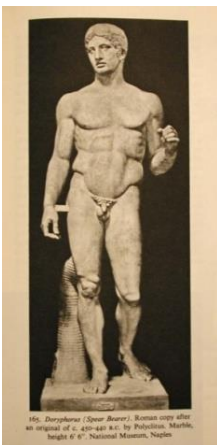


14. "DORYPHORUS (Spear Bearer)" 2000, bronze/granite, 112'h x40'w x28'd John Van Alstine

***Doryphorus, 2000, green granite/bronze, 112”h x40”w x28”d***

[http://www.johnvanalstine.com/docs/garden/grounds\\_02/lg\\_img\\_gar\\_dory.htm](http://www.johnvanalstine.com/docs/garden/grounds_02/lg_img_gar_dory.htm)

*As its title suggests this work references the classical Greek sculpture by Polyclitus, DORYPHORUS (Spear Bearer) c.450-440 B.C. The carved marble figure is a quintessential example of contrapposto (counterpoise), the Italian word used to describe the “S-curve” vertical line that runs through figurative sculpture in antiquity. This innovation allowed the Greeks to convincingly convey motion or life in a non-moving piece of stone.*



Hg. Doryphoros (Spear Bearer). Roman copy after an original of c. 450-440 B.C. by Polyclitus. Marble. Height 6' 9". National Museum, Naples.

*My granite and bronze Doryphorus, (T-00-18) with its reverse "S" curve pays homage to classical work and the way the ancients were able to breathe life and movement into inanimate materials, a concept at the very core of my work for more than 40 years.*

***Polyclitus, DORYPHORUS (Spear Bearer) c.450-440 B.C. (B-00-03)***



15.

"SAXUM VELUM (stone sail)" 1996, granite/bronze, 92"h x46"w x38"d

John Van Alstine

**SAXUM VELUM (stone sail)**, 1996, Bronze/granite, 92"h x46"w x38"d  
[http://www.johnvanalstine.com/docs/lg\\_img\\_SaxumVela.htm](http://www.johnvanalstine.com/docs/lg_img_SaxumVela.htm)

*The Latin title translates as "Stone Sail;" the sculpture features a bronze vessel careening off a sparkling gray granite "waterfall", together they present an interesting suite of ironies.*

*Stone that we perceive as durable, ageless and heavy takes on the visual fluidity and capriciousness of water, reminding us that granite, an igneous stone, was once liquid. A sail generally get its billowing shape from something as ephemeral as the wind. Sparkling bits of cystalin mica embedded in the granite bring to mind sun sparkling on freshly fallen snow. All these characteristics and associations are quite the opposite of our traditional understanding of stone.*

*Art often confronts us with these conceptual reversals allowing, or sometimes forcing, us "to see" our preconceived ideas differently. When successful, it can realign our instinctive understanding of the "real world" and open us up to new ideas and experiences.*



16. **LABYRINTH TROPHY I" 1996, bronze/granite, 110"h x53"w x31"d**  
John van Alstine

"Labyrinth Trophy" is a cast bronze and granite sculpture inspired by the classical myth of Theseus slaying of the Minotaur in the Labyrinth on the island of Crete. The King had offered the hand in of his daughter Ariadne marriage to the person who could slay the Minotaur and rid the island of the monster. When Ariadne, an exceptional weaver, learned of the plan, she knew that even a hero like Theseus would get lost in the winding passages of the labyrinth so she gave him a ball of thread. Theseus entered the dark, winding labyrinth, unraveling the thread as he went and after he had disposed of the monster was able to use it to find his way out safely.

The sculpture features an oar suggesting Theseus' boat passage to Crete, horns of the Minotaur poised on top as the "trophy" and a bit of bronze thread. It is a good example of how mythology as a springboard for contemporary expression.





7. **SISYPHEAN CIRCLE 8-14-17, 2017 (located near the entrance gate)**

Granite/galvanized and powder-coated steel, 49"h x53"w x16"d (124 x 134 x 41d cm)  
[http://www.johnvanalstine.com/docs/SisypheanCircle\\_8-14-17\\_T-17-21.htm](http://www.johnvanalstine.com/docs/SisypheanCircle_8-14-17_T-17-21.htm)

John Van Alstine

**(see #6 – Sisyphean Circle statement)**