

'Tempered by Memory'

AN APPROXIMATE rendering of "Tempered by Memory" outside the City Center in downtown Saratoga Springs. Artists John Van Alstine, left, and Noah Savett pose next to a piece of steel from the World Trade Center during a news conference Wednesday at NS Associates in Gansevoort.

RENDERING COURTESY SARATOGA ARTS
ARTISTS' PORTRAIT BY PAUL BUCKOWSKI/TIMES UNION



Saratoga Springs sculpture will resurrect steel from attacks on World Trade Center

BY TOM KEYSER
STAFF WRITER

The steel lies bent, ripped and twisted in the soggy yard at the steel-fabrication plant in Gansevoort. It makes no sound, but speaks a language all Americans understand.

In 3 1/2 months, residents of the Capital Region will become part of the conversation when a large sculpture fashioned from the beams is unveiled outside the Saratoga Springs City Center. The five pieces, weighing from 2,000 to 10,000 pounds, once stood straight and pure as part of the World Trade Center.

When the terrorist-stricken towers collapsed 10 years ago, they became part of the rubble — and then part of the approximately 1 percent of the steel preserved by the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey, which owned the 110-story buildings. The salvaged steel was stockpiled in a hangar at John F. Kennedy International Airport for distribution to groups and communities, primarily for memorials.

Using the steel for art has been much rarer, says Elizabeth Dubben, project manager for the sculpture and director of exhibitions for Saratoga Arts, the nonprofit organization that is overseeing the project. She says she believes it will be the first large sculpture of World Trade Center steel in the country.

Called "Tempered by Memory," the sculpture is being created by Capital Region artists John Van Alstine and Noah Savett. They've worked as sculptors for decades and exhibited many outdoor pieces.

"We're chomping at the bit to get going," Savett said last week.

They wanted to start today, but recent rains likely delayed the start until next week. The steel awaits at NA Associates, Savett's steel-fabrication plant. It has been there since November, as is-

sues of funding, location and City Council approval were addressed.

The project was born last spring when the commanding officer of the Naval Support Unit in Saratoga Springs contacted Saratoga Arts about the possibility of obtaining World Trade Center steel for a sculpture in the city. The Port Authority had been dispensing the steel since 2002, and the program was coming to an end.

Mark Schaming, director of exhibitions and programs at the State Museum, helped Saratoga

Arts cut through red tape with the Port Authority. Since shortly after 9/11, he had been working with the authority as it collected and decided what to do with the steel.

When Dubben and the two sculptors traveled to the JFK airport last summer to pick out the steel, Schaming went with them.

"Once they saw the steel, they started imagining in less of an abstract way how this would stand and come together," he said. "And while they're making a work of art with this, they seem to be very respectful of the steel as artifacts."

"They're using material that's incredibly loaded with a sense of history. It has its own voice."

Once they picked out the five pieces and returned home, they began to see how the community was going to embrace the project. Charles Van Hall, owner of Metro Metals Recycling in Watervliet, volunteered a truck, driver and crane to transport the material to Savett's plant in Gansevoort.

Then, as word spread, all manner of laborers, from iron workers to crane operators, offered to help. Of the project's \$196,000 budget, Dubben says, \$119,000 is in-kind donations of workers volunteering materials

Please see **MEMORY E7** ▶

On the Web

For more information about "Tempered by Memory," visit the Saratoga Arts website at <http://www.saratoga-arts.org>



DOUG KANTER/AFP/GETTY IMAGES
FIREFIGHTERS MAKE their way through the rubble of the World Trade Center on Sept. 11, 2001.