

J OHN VAN ALSTINE



The Phillips Collection
May 16-June 28, 1987

JOHN VAN ALSTINE (born 1952, Johnstown, New York) lived in Wyoming and Washington, D.C. for several years before moving to New Jersey, where he currently works. His massive steel and granite sculptures concentrate the vital elements of sculpture—weight, mass, gravity, space, balance—resulting in dramatic works that have a quality of barely restrained force and energy. In the structure of his works, there is a dynamic tension created by the physical nature of the steel and granite, together with his use of suspension, gravity and balance.

Van Alstine's hand is evident in his art; his works reveal the intense strength and force necessary to manipulate very resistant materials. There is also a more subtle tension produced by his combination of man-made and natural materials, which exemplifies the elemental opposition of nature and culture in our society.

Although composed of the same materials that the Minimalist sculptors of the 1960s and 1970s used, Van Alstine's monumental works are not impenetrable; instead they are evocative and referential. His sculptures do not passively sit by and wait to be noticed. They provoke responses by aggressively interacting with their environment and directly assaulting the viewer, demanding attention. Simultaneously humorous and threatening, the animation of Van Alstine's sculptures is further enhanced by titles that shape the interpretation of his works.

Linda Johnson



Education

Cornell University, MFA, 1976
Kent State University, BFA, 1974
St. Lawrence University,
attended 1970–72

Awards

1986 Individual Artists Fellowship,
National Endowment for the Arts
1985 Yaddo Fellowship,
Saratoga Springs, NY
1984 Individual Artists Fellowship,
New Jersey Council on the Arts
1983 Creative and Performing Arts
Award, University of Maryland,
College Park
1981 Individual Artists Fellowship,
D.C. Commission on the Arts
1980 Louis C. Tiffany Artists
Fellowship
1975 Graduate Fellowship in
Sculpture, Cornell University

Public Collections

Carnegie Institute of Art,
Pittsburgh, PA
Corcoran Gallery of Art,
Washington, DC
Denver Museum of Art
Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture
Garden, Smithsonian Institution,
Washington, DC
National Museum of American Art,
Smithsonian Institution,
Washington, DC
Museum of Modern Art, Gulbenkian
Foundation, Lisbon, Portugal

Solo Exhibitions

1987 Museum of National Arts Founda-
tion, New York, NY
1986 George Ciscle Gallery,
Baltimore, MD
1985 Osuna Gallery, Washington, DC
1984 Diane Brown Gallery, New York
Grimaldis Gallery, Baltimore, MD
St. Lawrence University
1983 Osuna Gallery, Washington, DC
1981 Henri Gallery, Washington, DC
Osuna Gallery, Washington, DC
1980 Michigan State University
University of Colorado, Boulder
1979 Neill Gallery, New York, NY
1978 Colorado State University, Fort Collins
1977 Northern Arizona State University, Flagstaff
1976 Herbert F. Johnson Museum, Cornell University



Selected Group Exhibitions

1987 New Jersey Arts Council, Artists Fellowship Exhibition, Morris Museum
1985 New Jersey Artists Biennial, Newark Museum
Drawings by Sculptors, Diane Brown Gallery, New York, NY
Discoveries and Disclosures, George Ciscle Gallery, Baltimore, MD
1984 Timely Objects, Diane Brown Gallery, New York, NY
1983 Flatworks, Non 3-D Works by Sculptors, Washington Project for the Arts,
Washington, DC
Baltimore Sculpture, Works in Public Sites, Mayor's Advisory Council for the Arts

- 1982 International Sculpture Conference, 10 Washington Sculptors, San Francisco D.C. Commission on the Arts, Artists Fellowship Grantees Exhibition, Washington, DC
- 1980 Recent Acquisitions, Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, DC
- 1979 Directions 79, Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Smithsonian Institution, Washington DC
- 1978 Cornell Then/Sculpture Now, Herbert F. Johnson Museum, Cornell University
- 1970-80 First Western States Biennial, Denver Museum; National Collection of Fine Arts, Washington, DC; San Francisco Museum of Modern Art; Seattle Art Museum

Large Scale Outdoor Commissions

- 1985 Austin College, Sherman, TX
- 1983 Luck Stone Corporation, Richmond, VA
- 1982 City of Billings, MT

Selected Bibliography

- Allen, Jane Addams. "Playful Sculpture." *The Washington Times*, May 19, 1983
- Fox, Howard N. *Directions*. Washington, D.C.: Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Smithsonian Institution, 1979.
- Markovich, Ann. "John Van Alstine." *New Art Examiner*, October, 1984.
- Richard, Paul. "John Van Alstine." *The Washington Post*, October 17, 1985.
- "Living Steel and Stone, sculpture of John Van Alstine." *The Washington Post*, May 21, 1983.
- Tannous, David. "John Van Alstine." *Art in America*, December, 1981.

Catalogue (height x width x depth)

Drastic Measures 1984-87 (Cover)
 Painted steel and granite
 144 x 144 x 96"
 Courtesy of Osuna Gallery, Washington, DC

Luna 1985-87 (Right panel)
 Painted steel and granite
 120 x 84 x 60"
 Courtesy of Osuna Gallery, Washington, DC

Triad 1986 (Left panel)
 Painted steel
 138 x 120 x 60"
 Courtesy of Osuna Gallery, Washington, DC

This exhibition has been generously funded by an anonymous donor.

The Phillips Collection
 1600 21st Street, NW
 Washington, DC 20009