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## **Torin Porter's Outdoor Sculpture *Astronomer* Given to AVA**

AVA Gallery and Art Center, located at 11 Bank Street in Lebanon, NH, is pleased to announce that Torin Porter's 12-foot steel sculpture, *Astronomer*, on view in front of AVA's Carter-Kelsey Building since April, has been purchased by supporters who wish to remain anonymous and given to AVA for permanent display.



The sculpture was installed last spring in connection with an exhibition of Porter's work at AVA. While it was created specifically for this exhibit, the artist generously agreed to have it remain on site until October.

Prominently on display near Bank Street, and easily visible to pedestrians as well as motorists, the sculpture immediately drew positive attention as well as requests for it to be exhibited for a longer period.

The donors who acquired *Astronomer* gifted it to AVA in celebration of the organization's new Sculptural Studies Building, which is nearing its completion, as well as in acknowledgement of AVA's Executive Director, Bente Torjusen, who is retiring in December after thirty years at the helm. The gift of the sculpture was announced on

October 8 during a special event in the new building, when Torjusen was honored and when Porter, the sculptor who created *Astronomer*, was present.

Torin Porter, of Glover, VT, grew up next door to the Bread & Puppet Theater and participated in their annual Domestic Resurrection Circuses. He received his BA in Studio Art from Dartmouth College and subsequently toured internationally as a stilt dancer with the MOMIX dance company and with the rock band Jane's Addiction. He created sculptural performance events for Phish's outdoor concerts, large-scale sculptures and parade floats for the Bonnaroo music festival in Tennessee, and served as Props Master for Circus Smirkus.

Porter creates both small and large-scale sculpture. His smaller work is intimate and has a strong narrative thread with an emphasis on humanity—the viewer sees the piece in its own world and scale. In contrast, Porter's large sculptures give the viewer a sense that they are a player in this narrative.

About *Astronomer*, Porter writes: "The sculpture, a 12 foot tall forearm and hand reaching upward, embodies our instinct to do what we all do every day, and that is to use our senses to explore, discover, and learn about the world around us and to simultaneously take part in that world. Some of our surroundings are so far away we could never reach them. But at night, celestial light from years gone by arrives in a constant stream to those who direct their attention upwards towards infinity."

While *Astronomer* is a gift to AVA, the sculpture is, essentially, also a gift to the City and the citizens of Lebanon. States David Brooks, the City of Lebanon's Director of Planning and Zoning: "Finding opportunities to highlight and promote Lebanon's wealth of arts and cultural organizations and resources is one of the key concepts expressed in the Downtown Vision Plan as well as the City's Master Plan. The creation and display of civic art can benefit our community, not only by enlivening our active streets and centers, but also by supporting the creative economy. It is wonderful that

downtown Lebanon, and AVA Gallery's presence in it, will be enhanced by the permanent addition of this unique and prominent sculpture."

AVA Gallery and Art Center/Alliance for the Visual Arts is a non-profit organization representing Vermont and New Hampshire artists. Located at 11 Bank Street right off Colburn Park in Lebanon, NH, the gallery is open Tuesday through Saturday from 11AM to 5PM (7pm on Thursdays) and by appointment; closed on Sundays and Mondays.



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Admission is free, and the gallery is accessible to the handicapped.

AVA is supported in part by:

the New Hampshire State Council on the Arts, the National Endowment for the Arts  
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State Council on the Arts**