

9/11 memorial sculpture created by two AU alums

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A new 9-11 Memorial, created by two Alfred University graduates, will mark the 10th anniversary of the destruction of New York's World Trade Center. It is mounted on a wall in the Main Pavilion of Sherwood Island State Park in Westport, CT, the state's first established park. The sculptors, David Boyajian of New Fairfield, CT, and Matt Rink of Redding, CT, graduated from Alfred a full generation apart. Boyajian, 53, received a BFA from the School of Art & Design at Alfred University in 1980. Rink, with whom he won the commission, is 26 and graduated with a BFA, Cum Laude, May 2007. Both studied under Alfred Sculptor Professor Glenn Zwegardt, who retired in 2007 and remains close to the artists. The two sculptors won a competition sponsored by the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection and the Connecticut Commission on Culture and Tourism. The new installation is sited in a pavilion where the State annually marks the tragedy. It complements Connecticut's official 9-11 Living Memorial, a 9-foot long granite memorial stone on a nearby one-third-acre point in Sherwood Island that faces Manhattan, where smoke rising from the destroyed twin towers was visible for days. Dedication of the sculpture, on Thursday, Sept. 8, will be attended by Connecticut Gov. Dan Malloy, a host of state dignitaries and friends, and family members related to many local residents who perished in the World Trade Center. Some 151 Connecticut residents perished at the World Trade Center. The Living Memorial, erected September 11, 2002, commemorates all who lost their lives in the worst foreign attack on American soil. The new installation at Sherwood Island's Main Pavilion is a large floral festoon fabricated from aluminum, including—as required in the Request for Proposal—shards of the metal recovered from the Twin Towers. About 10 feet high and 30 feet wide, the sculpture dramatically undulates across the pavilion's faade under the protection of a roof. Ten large flower petals, each marking a year since the tragedy, were fabricated from the World Trade Center's remains. Except for the required cutting and bending of the pieces into floral shapes, the sheet aluminum retains the rough patina and marks found on them in situ. Boyajian and Rink, who jointly conceived the piece, welded the petals in place as they were found: dark, undressed forms, in contrast to the background made from new, polished aluminum sheet. Boyajian holds an MFA from the Rinehart School of Maryland Institute of Art and is a sculptor of national repute. His expressionistic work is influenced by the tropes of nature. He has shown at scores of solo and group exhibitions in the United States and abroad, and is widely collected. Among his commissions are the Hope Award, commissioned by AmeriCares, the Stamford, CT-based humanitarian group, for President and Mrs. George H. Bush; a metal wall relief for the Miller Memorial Cultural Complex in Hamden, CT; and a large metal tableau of Supreme Court Justice Thurgood Marshall for a Bridgeport, CT, Magnet School, which was unveiled by Mrs. Marshall on the 50th anniversary of the Brown v. the Board of Education desegregation ruling. Rink received an MFA, summa cum laude, from Clemson University. He is co-founder of All Creations, a collaborative group specializing in public art that uses sustainable and renewable material in its practice. He has exhibited in Virginia, South Carolina, New York and Connecticut. He has participated in Performance Art, notably at Dia Beacon, Beacon, NY, and received several grants and fellowships. Mr. Rink was an artist-in-residence at Boyajian's Sculpture Barn, a teaching facility, gallery, and an outdoor sculpture field where Rink exhibited a massive steel pipe sculpture.