



Eastern Connecticut State University

NEWS

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Eastern Art Professor's Public Art Project Gets "Standing Ovation"

Willimantic, Conn. – A public art project designed by Eastern Connecticut State University Art Professor June Bisantz titled "Standing Ovation" has been installed at 58 Renne Avenue in Pittsfield, MA. "Standing Ovation" is a customized pedestrian crossing button that generates a thunderous round of applause when pushed. The button will be applauding the public through 2010.

"Standing Ovation" is intended to stimulate awareness, engagement and laughter while delivering a serious message about the power of creative action to lift spirits, inspire curiosity and connect people to their environment and each other. Although it appears to be a "normal" pedestrian crossing button at first glance, the "Standing Ovation" applause button offers an enthusiastic and life-affirming experience outside the norm, transforming public space into a personalized, interactive environment.

"My vision for this piece is to make people smile, to brighten their day and release their positive energy into the community and ultimately into the world," said

Bisantz. “This project reflects my fundamental understanding of why art exists – to defy expectations, lead the way, bring us joy and remind us that we are not alone.”

In fall 2008, the ArtScape Committee in Pittsfield commissioned Bisantz to install her “Standing Ovation” applause button as part of its “2009-10 ArtScape,” an ongoing public art initiative sponsored by Pittsfield’s Cultural Council and the Lichtenstein Center for the Arts. Bisantz plans to bring “Standing Ovation” to Connecticut in 2010.

Bisantz teaches digital art and design at Eastern. She received a Master of Fine Arts degree in painting from Claremont Graduate University in California. Her work as a commercial artist and illustrator has appeared in Esquire and Vanity Fair magazines, and her paintings, collages and multimedia pieces have been shown in galleries and museums nationally and internationally, including the Discovery Museum in Bridgeport, the Benton Museum, University of Connecticut, the Copley Society of Art in Boston and Gallerie Alexi in Budapest. Since 1999, Bisantz has been the recipient of grant funding to support her public projects, including fellowships from the Connecticut Commission on Culture and Tourism, Connecticut State University research grants, and grants from the Te Women’s Foundation. Bisantz is also a musician and has co-produced several collections of original jazz, all of which have received national recognition.

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Eastern Connecticut State University is part of the Connecticut State University (CSU) system and is the state’s public liberal arts university. ECSU serves more than 5,000 students each year on its Willimantic campus.