



IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 11, 2012

(860) 306-3737

CONTACT: Jim Watson

(860) 270-8182, cell

## **STATE'S NEW CITY CANVASES ARTS INITIATIVE MAKES BIG IMPACT IN NEW LONDON**

*'Cabinet of Shells' is First Mural Unveiled, Six to Follow Throughout  
State*

An imposing 40-foot-tall mural titled "Cabinet of Shells" will make its debut in New London on Wednesday. The impressive mural is the first public art piece funded through the state's new arts program called City Canvases, an initiative designed to jumpstart the rebirth of downtown areas by using visual arts to improve public spaces.

City Canvases, a \$1 million pilot program, funded through the Department of Economic and Community Development (DECD), was launched earlier this year by Governor Dannel P. Malloy. The program will help seven cities partner with local arts organizations to commission large-scale works of public art. In addition to New London, works are planned to be unveiled in Bridgeport, Hartford, New Britain, Stamford, Torrington, and Waterbury.

The program leverages the impact arts can have on community and economic development efforts in urban areas, and is part of the DECD Office of Arts' larger placemaking initiative. Placemaking, put simply, is about

turning our cities and towns into destinations, places where people want to live, work and visit.

“Creative placemaking animates public and private spaces, rejuvenates buildings and streetscapes, improves local business viability and public safety, and brings diverse people together to celebrate, inspire, and be inspired,” said Christopher “Kip” Bergstrom, deputy commissioner of DECD. “Connecticut has always been a talent magnet and a place of innovation. City Canvases amplifies the uniqueness and authenticity of our communities, making them more attractive not only to our residents, but also to the young entrepreneurs and innovators who will fuel our economic engines.”

Starting Wednesday, people will have another reason to visit New London.

“Cabinet of Shells,” which will greet approximately one million ferry and train riders per year upon their arrival in the city, features digital images of seashells printed on vinyl stretched across frames and mounted on the exterior of the Water Street Parking Garage facing the New London Train Station.

The work, created by local designer Peter Good, employs an art technique called trompe l’oeil, which uses realistic imagery and creates the illusion of a three dimensional object. Good, along with Jan Cummings, Kirsten Desnoyers and Jesse Good, chose images of shells from Indonesia, India and Mexico for their exotic colors and elegant shapes. Peter Good, an award-winning graphic designer and illustrator, is well known in Connecticut for the powerful images he has created for corporations, museums and arts organizations.

In addition to “Cabinet of Shells,” three new murals will be installed on Eugene O’Neill Drive at the corner of State Street over the next two months to complement the existing whale mural by internationally recognized Robert Wyland. Collectively, the pieces will be part of “Wall-To-Wall: The New London Mural Walk,” all developed by Hygienic Art Inc. and the city of New London and funded through the \$126,000 grant from the City Canvases program.

The murals are commissioned by Hygienic Art with support from DECD, Connecticut Office of the Arts, Water Street Garage and the City Center District in partnership with the Garde Arts Center, Chamber of Commerce of Eastern CT, City Center District, OpSail2012, SailFest, and the Kente Cultural Center.

When completed, “Wall-To-Wall” will be the largest concentrated mural walk in New England. It will consist of a walking tour, and add to the existing nine public art works within a six block radius. The proposed sites directly lead to and from the pre-revolutionary Parade Plaza where a \$10 million renovation was recently completed.

"This exciting partnership between New London area artists, the city of New London, and the State of Connecticut recognizes and amplifies the historical legacy of our city as the creative hub of a region rich in diverse art forms," said Mayor Daryl Justin Finizio. "Wall-to-Wall: The New London Mural Walk represents a continuation of the City's commitment to improve and beautify the gateway approaches into our community. This walk will showcase to visitors from Connecticut and elsewhere the continuing creative energy, openness and innovative initiative of this urban gem."

State and city officials and elected representatives will gather at the Water Street Garage, 161 Water Street, in downtown New London for Wednesday's event. Deputy Commissioner Bergstrom, Mayor Finizio, Sen. Andrea Stillman and Vincent Scarano, President of Hygienic Art, will unveil the "Cabinet of Shells" at 11:30 a.m. The Kaze Taiko drumming ensemble of Wesleyan University will open the event with a performance beginning at 11:15.

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