

# Making Waves

## A new outdoor sculpture leaves its mark in downtown Providence

By Rebecca Remillard

**Throughout a lifetime,** the idea of "home" has an ever-changing location. For Gillian Christy, home was once a town in midwestern Iowa and is now the buzzing city of Providence. And just a few weeks ago, the young sculptor made a rather significant contribution to her adopted home with the addition of a 18 foot 7 piece of artwork in downtown Providence. "I like to sculpt things that are familiar. It's interesting to take shapes of what home was growing up and combine them with Providence and the city. I want to tell a story with the piece," she says. By taking common objects and recreating them with a different form or function, she succeeds in skewing everyday reality.

Christy works with sheet metal, steel, bronze and brass. She welds the materials, combining them to create a warm, organic color palette. Her newest permanent installation sits at the Waterplace Luxury Condominiums on Exchange Street. Titled *Wave Traveler*, the sculpture attempts to incorporate elements of its Providence environment. "Since the development was called Waterplace, I wanted to go with the water theme," explains Christy. "I thought of waves because we're in the Ocean State, but I also started thinking about sound waves and what connects people. I ended up with a pathway feel in the sculpture and a running floorboard pattern, reminiscent of an old New England wooden floor." *Wave Traveler* took six months to complete and was built on its side. The first time Gillian saw the 18' piece standing up was when it was being craned into place.

Waterplace Condominiums is not the only showcase of Gillian's work in Providence. She is responsible for the bronze sign outside of Tazza Café on Westminster and the stainless steel bar elements in Cuban Revolution. In 2008, she completed the sculpture at the Woonasquatucket River and is also the artist behind the 72' bronze piece climbing the smoke stack at The Plant on Valley Street. "I love public



art because people can live among it and incorporate it into their lives. It makes a person stop, think or smile," says Christy. Her work has been displayed all over the country in both permanent outdoor exhibitions and indoor collections, such as *Her Story* in Davenport, Iowa's West High School, Christy's alma mater.

Since September of 2005, Christy has been renting studio space on Harris Avenue from the Ajay Land Company. The building provides a working environment for artists in various media. She says that Providence is the perfect place to start her sculpting career because of its proximity to Boston and New York City and its plethora of opportunities. After graduation from the University of Northern Iowa, Christy knew that she wanted to move to the East Coast to work on her art. She has now been in Providence for seven years.

Christy is currently selling a series of pieces for the home: a steel curtained mirror and small-scale bronze sculptures. They are available for purchase on her website, [www.gillianchristy.com](http://www.gillianchristy.com), along with dry-point prints, which she became interested in while studying in Italy in 2002. For more information on Christy and her art, visit her website or call 862-9426.