

Paine Field Park Art Project Wins International Honor



A public art project commissioned by Snohomish County and paid for through the 1-percent-for-the-arts program has been nationally recognized by Americans for the Arts as one of the best public arts projects in the nation.

"Landing Zone," an art installation at Paine Field Community Park by artist Peter Reiquam was selected for the 2010 Public Art Year in Review, recognizing 40 of the year's best public art works in the United States and Canada. The works were chosen from more than 300 entries.

"It's important that we promote art and cultural identity in Snohomish County because it helps build a healthy and vibrant community of which residents can be proud," Snohomish County Executive Aaron Reardon said. "This honor further shows we are on the right track with our 1-percent-for-the-arts program."

The whimsical sculpture of a just-landed flying saucer was the county's first public art project since the inception of the Snohomish County Arts Commission in 2004 and Reardon's request for arts funding from certain county construction projects and the County Council's approval of that funding in 2006.

"Peter Reiquam's 'Landing Zone' is a brilliant convergence of art and function and a fine illustration of accessible art," said Snohomish County Arts Commission Chairwoman Rebecca Chawgo. "'Landing Zone' has already become a landmark. It is a work of art that we can enjoy and a place we can meet for generations to come."

Landing Zone put a humorous spin on the theme of flight with its location so close to the airport. The installation was created to represent a new kind of community gathering place, one that provides a unique, sculptural plaza shelter in the form of a 16-foot-diameter flying saucer. Integrated seating in the form of natural boulders suggests an alien landscape and a cast concrete "X" bench marks the fictional landing zone. The 1-percent-for-the-arts program requires a 1-percent contribution to the county's arts fund as part of county construction projects – excluding roads – that cost at least \$100,000. Funds generated by the 1 percent are designated toward acquisition of visual and performing works of art.

Art works are selected based upon recommendation to the county executive by the Snohomish County Arts Commission. Since the program began, the county has installed and purchased 14 works from available funding.

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