

PROMOTION RECOMMENDATION
The University of Michigan
School of Art and Design

Joel L. Cressman, associate professor of art, with tenure, School of Art and Design, and associate professor in the Residential College, without tenure, College of Literature, Science, and the Arts, is recommended for promotion to professor of art and design, with tenure, School of Art and Design, and professor in the Residential College, without tenure, College of Literature, Science, and the Arts.

Academic Degrees:

M.F.A. 1975 University of Michigan, School of Art and Design, Ann Arbor, MI
B.S.Des. 1968 University of Michigan, School of Art and Design, Ann Arbor, MI

Professional Record:

2004 – present Associate Professor of Art, with tenure, School of Art and Design, and Associate Professor in the Residential College, without tenure, College of Literature, Science, and the Arts, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, MI
1977 – 2003 Lecturer III, Residential College, College of Literature, Science, and the Arts, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, MI

Summary of Evaluation:

Teaching – Professor Cressman is an inventive, encouraging, inspiring, and supportive teacher, one who places strong emphasis on the value of individual creativity and imparts a vast knowledge to a range of students without dogma. Students, regardless of level of experience, cite Professor Cressman’s focus, intensity, and commitment to serve as a mentor, a role model and a guide – praise that is doubly impressive considering the two notably distinct academic units in which he teaches. While the bulk of his teaching within the Residential College (RC) revolves around a portfolio of courses for non-art majors, in the School of Art and Design, Professor Cressman’s constituency is almost exclusively art-design BFA students. Within the context of the Residential College, Professor Cressman’s challenge is enabling access to a perceptual and cognitive world that is primarily visual and frequently technical (particularly with the printmaking courses he teaches.) This is no small accomplishment, as the translation from a primarily verbal and cerebral mode of processing information to one of registering and recording visual phenomena is a challenge akin to learning a new language. Professor Cressman has thrived within this context, evidenced in the engaged atmosphere of his RC courses, the dynamic range of student work, and perhaps most explicitly among letters from former RC students who cite Professor Cressman’s classes as pivotal experiences. In the School of Art and Design, Professor Cressman has been an active faculty member among the MFA and BFA students. Students in these courses, which fill to capacity as soon as they are listed, cite his commitment to skill building and experimentation as side-by-side values that inspire their own practice. Student refer to the enormous care and preparation Professor Cressman builds into class projects, managed critiques, individuated assignments and technical knowledge. Additionally, Professor Cressman has worked with students on inventive and impressive independent studies, and in the University of Michigan’s Sesto Fiorentina program in Italy.

Creative Work / Research – Professor Cressman’s creative practice is one of exceptional focus and intensity. Employing what at their surface seem humble materials—sticks, pins, paper, graphite—he creates sculptural drawings that occupy physical space with a visual eloquence and spatial intelligence that belies disarmingly simple ingredients. His work exemplifies processes and practices of rigorous material and spatial exploration, and he is committed to expanding the visual language of drawing through innovative projects that are highly regarded. Professor Cressman’s practice, while deeply rooted in the traditions of drawing and printmaking, is by no means limited by these traditions. He uses the

formal vocabulary of the draftsman—of graphite on paper, of line describing form in space—to levitate from the confines of the flat surfaces that habitually root drawings and prints, and that have for centuries placed them in the realm of illusion. At the hands of Professor Cressman, the matter of drawing is expanded, taking on the somatic experiences and roles of architecture and sculpture by engaging real physical space to create compelling installations in unlikely places—corners, doorways to name a few. His work has been featured prominently in exhibitions throughout Michigan, and most notable, a major site specific installation in 2009 as part of an International Biennial on the grounds of Coral del Carbon, a 14th century building in Spain, where Professor Cressman activated the spaces between major structural columns to create a majestic screen of suspended linear elements. His work is also included in numerous collections throughout the United States.

Significant Recent Works and Activities:

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| 2011 | Group Exhibition, <i>35 Years of Friends of Kresge Acquisitions</i> , Kresge Museum, Michigan State University, East Lansing, MI |
| 2010 | Group Exhibition, <i>Great Lakes Drawing Biennial</i> , Eastern Michigan University, Ypsilanti, MI |
| 2010 | Merit Award, <i>Great Lakes Drawing Biennial</i> , Eastern Michigan University, Ypsilanti, MI |
| 2009 | Group Exhibition, <i>Spora '09: Biennial International Exhibition</i> , Granada, Spain |
| 2008 | Group Exhibition, <i>Signatures: Larry Cressman, Charles McGee, Harry Zmijewski</i> , Buckham Gallery, Flint, MI |
| 2007 | Solo Exhibition, <i>Larry Cressman: Recent Work</i> , Elsie Munro Gallery, Albion College, Albion, MI |
| 2006 | Panel Presenter, <i>Impermanence</i> , Joint Southeastern College Art / Mid America College Art Association Conference, Vanderbilt University, Nashville, TN |

Service – Professor Cressman is an exemplar of the active artist-educator-citizen. He does a notable job balancing service commitments to two academic units while maintaining an active presence in the regional arts community. He has served on numerous committees, curricula planning teams, and task forces across the University, including the President’s Advisory Committee on Public Art, the Arts Consortium, the Residential College Executive Committee, and the Residential College 40th Anniversary Planning Committee. In addition, he directs the Residential College Gallery on a rotating basis and has served as program head of that unit’s studio arts program. In the community, he is a member of the Joint Task Force on Public Art shared between the University and the City of Ann Arbor, has served as a juror for a host of local exhibitions, and is a former member of the City of Ann Arbor’s Committee on Art in Public Places.

External Reviewers:

Reviewer A: “Larry Cressman is a perfect example of what a professor of art should be: a working artist. He continues to make work that is important and relevant...As a teacher, Larry is inventive and innovative, and the work of his students shows that he always encourages them to think outside the box.”

Reviewer B: “I have had countless opportunities to see the work of Michigan artists and artists from around the world. Larry Cressman is one of those artists whose work always makes me stop and look.”

Reviewer C: “Cressman has arrived at a creative vocabulary that is rigorous, endlessly variable and playful.”

Reviewer D: “Larry Cressman stands like a giant among the most fertilely cultivated analytical and creative minds with whom I have been privileged to interact and work with...A prolific visionary spirit who continues to test the parameters of conventional knowledge...”

Reviewer E: "Larry Cressman, in my estimation, is one of the best visual artists working in Southeast Michigan... Whether it is in persistent mark making, a romance with materials, or an unrelenting conceptual investigation, Cressman's passion is what great art is all about: an obsessive-compulsive vision quest for creative nirvana... If music could be visual material, then Cressman's drawings are the harmonious combination of elements in a symphony."

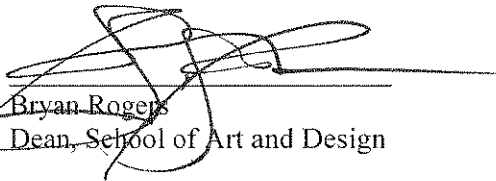
Reviewer F: "He is as thorough in his course preparation and teaching as he is in creating his meticulous artworks. His deep knowledge of traditional and contemporary artistic practice as well as a rigorous conceptual intellect informs his teaching and his ability to work with art and non art majors and effect successful learning for both... His work is elegant, personal, inventive, challenging, eye-engaging, painfully laborious, intellectually and physically stimulating, and profoundly focused."

Reviewer G: "Larry Cressman is a masterful craftsman. His work creates an understated visual order made from minimal low-tech materials; they bring to mind the subtle beauty of a Zen garden. In my assessment, the quality of his work is unquestionable."

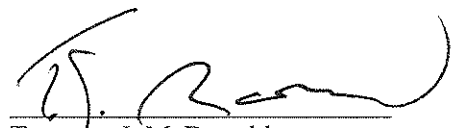
Reviewer H: "Larry's approach to making art begins from a remarkably simple premise but expands and mutates into astonishingly complex and sophisticated forms. His ability to define his own style and mine that philosophical idea in myriad directions keeps his work fresh and his mind focused. His serious creativity, his ability to communicate his ideas in both works and words, and his open and thoughtful nature make him an invaluable as a practicing artist and teacher..."

Summary of Recommendation:

Professor Cressman is an exceptional teacher, artist, and University citizen, who is deeply engaged with the mission and service of the University. We strongly recommend Joel L. Cressman for promotion to professor of art and design, with tenure, School of Art and Design, and professor in the Residential College, without tenure, College of Literature, Science, and the Arts.



Bryan Rogers
Dean, School of Art and Design



Terrence J. McDonald
Arthur F. Thurnau Professor,
Professor of History, and Dean
College of Literature, Science, and the Arts