

Pulse of the City

by George Zisiadis, Rich DDT, Matt Ligon, Rachel McConnell



Pulse of the City is an interactive public art installation that turns pedestrians' heartbeats into music. It consists of a large red heart with a speaker and handles mounted on a pole in the sidewalk. When visitors hold onto the handles, they hear their heartbeat layered over with custom music produced from their real-time pulse data.

Winner of the 2013 SXSW Interactive Award

"This is a truly unique project that connects Boston's residents and visitors to art in a whole new way," said Tom Menino, Mayor of Boston

About: Amidst the chaotic rhythms of the city, it helps pedestrians playfully reconnect with the rhythm of their bodies. It combines art, design, and technology to promote the use and celebration of public space in an uplifting and imaginative way.

It features a solar powered design and anonymously uploads citizen's pulse data to the cloud for statistical analysis. The idea was originally conceived and prototyped as part of San Francisco's Urban Prototyping Festival in 2012. The City of Boston commissioned five installations that were placed there in September 2013.

Operation Walkthru: Approach the heart, which has invitingly shaped handles encouraging you to grab hold. Instantly you hear the ding of a bell as the ring of LEDs lights up and the sensor calibrates, and within a couple seconds you hear and see a realtime representation of your heart pulsing. Within four beats a custom musical piece is played, based on your starting pulse, and as it plays out, it stays in sync with the beat of your heart.

Roles: Concept, software design, interface design, lighting design, sound design, sound curation. George Zisiadis lead the team and concept, Matt Ligon lead the electronics and sensor calibration, Rachel McConnell designed the hardware and lead fabrication.

Components: See righthand diagram. Solar panel also included.

[Pulse of the City Video](#)

