

ArtPrize 2010 prize winner 'Steam Pig' is being removed this week from The B.O.B. downtown

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By **Jeffrey Kaczmarczyk | The GR Press**

GRAND RAPIDS -- Parsifal the Steam Pig is leaving The B.O.B.'s parking lot this week.

The **ArtPrize 2010** entry has hovered over downtown since last fall's competition and exhibition while creators Thomas Birks, Joachim Jensen and Michael Knoll have worked to find a permanent home for their **ninth-place ArtPrize winner**.

Birks said it's time to move the behemoth to allow owners of The B.O.B. prepare for the third event founded by entrepreneur Rick DeVos.

"Our intention was to have it down before ArtPrize no matter what," Birks said. "Greg Gilmore and the Gilmore Collection have been extremely generous in letting it stay so long."

Steam Pig's creators are aware some people will miss the sight of Parsifal across the street from Van Andel Arena, where **country star Taylor Swift took pictures and tweeted them** to her Twitter followers last month when she appeared in Grand Rapids.

Cranes will be used today to remove parts of the 55-foot-long, 25-foot-wide and 25-foot-tall piece, in addition to an 8-foot-tall mast that raises it some 14 feet above the ground.

The Steam Pig's creators have a couple of parties interested in buying the \$7,000 prize winning sculpture, one of which is the Grand Rapids area, though Birks would not discuss potential buyers.

"We still have some other outside interests, but we're wide open," he said. "No one has signed on the dotted line or written a check."

Last fall, Birks said inquirers had come from as far away as the Philippines, though he hoped the whimsical sculpture would remain in West Michigan.

Steam Pig's creators are aware some people will miss seeing Parsifal downtown at the corner of Fulton Street and Monroe Avenue.

"It's been a provocative piece and a controversial piece. There are a lot of people who like and a lot who don't," he said. "But ArtPrize is to get people to talk, and I think we've done that."

ArtPrize 2011, the third installment of the competition with nearly \$450,000 in prize money awarded by viewers, opens Sept. 21.

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Removing the Steam Pig



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Workers remove the "Steam Pig" from The B.O.B. parking lot Monday, August 15, 2011. The pig, which was an ArtPrize 2010 entry, is going into storage and is for sale. (Cory Morse | The Grand Rapids Press)