

# Sentinel & Enterprise

## A Vision Welded In Steel

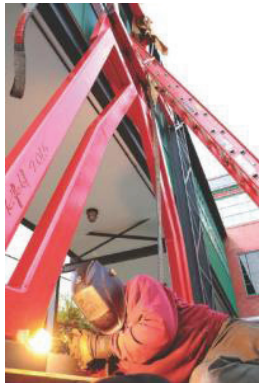
Monty Tech students help bring 18-foot art museum project to life

By Anna Burgess, [aburgess@sentinelandenterprise.com](mailto:aburgess@sentinelandenterprise.com)

FITCHBURG -10/14/2015- A 6-foot, bright red steel arm hovered above the courtyard outside the Fitchburg Art Museum on Tuesday morning. Suspended by a large crane, the arm floated over the courtyard and toward the museum building. The crane lowered it to a man on a ladder propped against the building, who guided the arm toward a matching giant, bright red body.

In the shape of a man straining against the pillars on either side of him, the new 18-foot-tall sculpture at the museum was nearly complete.

Currently unnamed, the sculpture was conceptualized and designed by Boston-based sculptor Doug Kornfeld, and was put together by students in the Monty Tech welding department.



Kelley Welding shop foreman Keith Harnden welds the feet of the 18-foot-tall work by Boston-based sculptor Doug Kornfeld at the Fitchburg Art Museum on Tuesday morning.

Photo:JOHN LOVE

It was commissioned by Fitchburg Art Museum Director Nick Capasso as a distinctive piece for the museum's courtyard. "Nick told me he wanted a significant piece for the museum, something that would really call attention to the museum," Kornfeld said. "He was ecstatic when he heard about the student involvement, because that's what he's all about, is getting the community involved."

Last year, Capasso thought of Kornfeld for the project, because he remembered a sculpture designed by Kornfeld was the most popular piece at the DeCordova Museum, where Capasso used to work.

"That's what I was looking for with this project," Capasso said. "Something people could really identify with." He also wanted something bright, bold, and easily visible from afar. With the 18-foot metal man, Kornfeld delivered.

Kornfeld agreed not to name his sculpture, and the Fitchburg Art Museum will hold an essay contest next month for local students to name the piece.

Kornfeld was inspired to create the piece, he said, by the location where it is now installed. Because the sculpture would fit between two metal pillars, he thought of the Biblical character Samson, whose strength allowed him to pull down pillars.

"Samson destroyed the towers," Kornfeld said, "and isn't that what



Monty Tech students Taryn Morrill, Matt Kauppila, center, and Carter Filiau enjoy the show as the new sculpture they helped put together is installed. Photo:JOHN LOVE

artists do? They disrupt things, they disrupt what's given."

Kornfeld was able to get in touch with the Monty Tech welding and metal fabrication department through a friend of a friend.

While he was initially concerned about the difficulty of building the sculpture of out steel, Kornfeld said, "we went over to the welding department, and showed them the plan, and they said, 'no problem, let's do it.'"

Welding instructor Tim Wright said about 10 students spent about a month working on the project, not including the auto-body class, who painted the sculpture. Three of the welding students, seniors Carter Filiau, Matt Kauppila, and Taryn Morrill, were at the museum Tuesday to see the sculpture installed.

They said the project was challenging, in part because of the odd angles required for the sculpture. "We had to look at the blueprint and figure out how to cut the pieces beforehand, because we only had a certain amount of steel," Morrill explained.

Wright said the project was great practice for the students because of the level of difficulty. He was also glad some of his students had the opportunity to watch professional welders at work, and to be part of a professional welding job. "This is real life," he said. "This is a real-life job."

On Tuesday morning, Kelley Welding Inc. employees were hard at work installing the giant sculpture. They placed pieces of the sculpture onto the base one by one, using the crane, and then clamped them together before permanently welding them to one another. Watching the installation, Wright said, his students were "in awe." "They probably couldn't visualize it before," he said. "We had a blueprint to go by, but until you see it physically going up, it's not real." The students themselves, who will likely not do much welding for art pieces in their future careers, said it was gratifying to see their skills put to an atypical use. "It's exciting," Morrill said. Filiau agreed, adding, "it's cool to have something we made on display."



Kelley Welding Inc.'s shop foreman with Kelley Welding, works to position one of the figure's arms.

Photo: JOHN LOVE