

From The Boyne City Gazette
BOYNE CITY SCULPTURE DRAWS CRITICISM

by Beth Gohs, Staff Writer

The accurate anatomy of an artist's statue, placed in downtown Boyne City as part of the walk about sculpture show, has some voicing concerns about whether the statue is appropriate for public viewing.

The Red Angus statue, created by local artist Doug Melvin, is made of scrap metal and is part of nine sculptures placed around Boyne.

"I think I admire a bull for the same reason a bullfighter admires a bull," said Melvin. "They are strong, fearless, and powerful—at the same time they are dangerous, and not very smart."

An artist his whole life, Melvin taught art classes at North Central Michigan College for 30 years, retired and is currently participating in Boyne City's sculpture show.

"The controversy about his testicles is just silly," said Melvin. "How do you do a sculpture of a bull. If he doesn't have testicles, he's not a bull, he's a steer. So the people that criticize that are just foolish and silly."

The concerns of the anatomically accurate bull have reached Boyne City Manager Michael Cain and Boyne City Main Street Program Manager Lori Meeder, who said they've heard concerns about several pieces in the past, but also compliments on the series.

"Art engenders conversations and discussion, it's part of what art is supposed to do," said Cain. "And, some people are going to like it and some people aren't. And if we only put out art that everyone said was 'fine' then it would be pretty darn boring."

Becky Mathers, a concerned citizen, said she felt it was inappropriate to have the sculpture near a children's play area.

"Anybody that has ever lived on a farm, or has been around bulls knows that bulls don't wear their balls in the middle of their belly," she said. "I'm all for artistic expression and that kind of thing. I just think that the people who decided to put those sculptures in town should have thought a little more about where they should put that particular sculpture.

She added, "If they wanted to display it, fine, but not in the children's area—that's extremely inappropriate."

Melvin responded to the concerns, saying he thought the whole issue was silly.

"I'm surprised that the people that are complaining about the testicles aren't also complaining about the nude female figures a couple hundred yards away," he said. "So what would upset them about a nude bull? What do they want me to do, put underpants on him, because he's not a bull if he doesn't have testicles."

Melvin Added, "If the person complaining about the testicles wants to design a pair of underpants, we could arrange a public installation with the press and public invited to watch them put the underpants on the bull."

Cain and Meeder both told the Gazette that, although there have been complaints, there was also plenty of positive feedback about the sculptures and the tour.

"We've gotten a few that were concerned, but we've gotten a lot more that were really positive about the whole show, so we've been pretty pleased about the whole response," said Meeder.

According to officials, there are no plans to remove Red Angus from the show.