

Crews work meticulously to remove SIUE's Plumb-Bob

by Megan Wieser

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EDWARDSVILLE - Meticulous work is underway in the **Southern Illinois University Edwardsville Morris University Center's Goshen Lounge** as crews are carefully removing the iconic [*Plumb-Bob*](#). The piece has a storied history at SIUE, where it has hung for nearly 50 years. Upon removal, the large mobile will undergo restoration.

SEE VIDEO OF PROCESS: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TalGBuxpKn8>

“Plumb-Bob is an original sculpture by the artist **Yasuhide Kobashi**, and it was installed in the MUC when it opened in 1967,” said Erin Vigneau-Dimick, collections manager of The University Museum and lecturer in the Department of Art and Design. “The sculpture was chosen specifically for this space, and the dimensions of the Goshen Lounge were actually created in reference to the sculpture.”

Current students, employees and alumni of SIUE, watched the careful removal process and shared their perspectives on *Plumb-Bob*.

“To me, it just sort of defines the space,” said Patricia Anderson, an employee and alumnus of the University. “It’s just part of the University, and I feel a real connection to the piece.”

“I noticed during my Springboard, and it kind of left a good impression on me,” recalled freshman Chris Sherrod. “It made the campus feel more warm and welcome.”

“As a very young child, probably starting as early as two or three years old, I used to run around this building all the time,” added Ben Moyer, employee and alumnus of SIUE, whose parents are also alums. “I would lay on the bench underneath *Plumb-Bob* and stare at it, because as a little kid it was really incredibly fascinating to me.”

The contracting firm, Methods and Materials, and SIUE University Museum staff have strategized how to best remove the sculpture in a way that will allow for its restoration and intricate reassembly.

“One of the things they’re first going to do is secure the platform to make sure that it’s really stable while we’re moving things around,” Vigneau-Dimick explained. “The idea here is to remove each element piece by piece. We have to be very specific as we remove them, so that we are able to keep the composition that the artist originally intended.

“Each piece has to be tagged. It has to be measured to its length, and then its partner has to also be measured. All of those things have to be done and put into a database before we remove each piece. Then, each piece will be dusted, wrapped and crated to be put away until such time that we’re able to restore it.”

“When we get to restoration, we’re going to be restringing it with a stainless steel nylon coated line,” she continued. “We’ll be looking at a cable that is rope covered so that we keep some of the same elements.”

The large scale work has fulfilled its artists’ intentions of engaging viewers in contemplation.

“I’ve always enjoyed seeing it in here,” said Valerie Goldston, faculty member and alumnus of SIUE. “It seemed like this mysterious mass of fun pieces of wood that you want to try and decide there’s some sort of path or logic to, but there just really isn’t, and it makes it all the more exciting to imagine.”

“If you look at it for a good minute or two, you’ll notice it’s a very movable piece,” added Jerry Fahey, SIUE retiree who worked in the University Museum and helped clean *Plumb-Bob* twice previously. “It goes with the air flow, through the seasons, when doors open and air moves in and comes out. It’s a very moving piece.”

“It’s important for us to be restoring this piece,” said Jeffrey Waple, vice chancellor for student affairs. “Art plays an important role in student spaces. As we look toward the master plan and renovation process of the Morris University Center, we will look to our colleagues in the College of Arts and Sciences to provide insight into what types of art pieces should be involved in the new project.”

“We’re still looking at when the conservation will happen, but we first wanted to take it down and deinstall it really carefully with a really good map, so that we can put it back in its original configuration,” concluded Vigneau-Dimick.

For more information on the restoration process and to provide input, visit The University Museum on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.

[Southern Illinois University Edwardsville](#) provides students with a high quality, affordable education that prepares them for successful careers and lives of purpose to shape a changing world. Built on the foundation of a broad-based liberal education, and enhanced by hands-on research and real-world experiences, the academic preparation SIUE students receive equips them to thrive in the global marketplace and make our communities better places to live. Situated on 2,660 acres of beautiful woodland atop

the bluffs overlooking the natural beauty of the Mississippi River's rich bottomland and only a short drive from downtown St. Louis, the SIUE campus is home to a diverse student body of more than 14,000.