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# Giant rubber duck coming for Chrysler's reopening

NORFOLK

The Chrysler Museum of Art has booked a giant rubber duck to make a mighty splash after the museum reopens on May 10.

The 40-foot sculpture, "Rubber Duck" by Dutch artist Florentijn Hofman, will cheerily bob in the Hague in front of the museum's entrance from May 17-26.

"We've been working on this for quite a while," said Bill Hennessey, director of the museum. "We wanted to make sure we had all our ducks in a row before we announced it."

Hofman's yacht-size rubber ducks have cruised worldwide, from London's Thames River to Hong Kong's Victoria Harbor. The duck has made international news at most of its stops, including several reports from ABC's Diane Sawyer.

"I've been following its progress around the world," Hennessey said Monday. The artist's website says little about his intent but states that the duck knows no borders, does not discriminate and has no political allegiance.

"The friendly, floating Rubber Duck has healing properties: it can relieve mondial tensions as well as define them," the website says.

Hennessey envisioned a narrative something like, "The duck has been traveling around and heard about the amazing new Chrysler Museum and had to see for himself."

He had hoped to provide the first United States setting for Hofman's outsize bath toy. But when he contacted the artist, he learned that the Pittsburgh Cultural Trust was set to host "Rubber Duck" last fall.

Norfolk will be the second U.S. duck stop, Hennessey said.

Hofman has made his ducks since around 2007 and has built a new duck for most locations, Hennessey said, adding that the rubberized material is similar to that used in inflatable life rafts.

The museum director paid a visit to Pittsburgh in October.

"I saw hundreds and hundreds of people flocking to see this thing and have their picture taken with it. It seemed to appeal equally to people of every background and every age."

The artist was there in late September to see his "Rubber Duck" towed down the Allegheny River to its

mooring site.

"It joins people together," Hofman told a television reporter on the scene. "It makes people happy and it reminds you of your childhood, maybe."

But is it art? And if it's art, what does it mean?

Yes, it's art, Hennessey said.

"Art's what artists make. I think it's more interesting than that, whatever you call this thing. Is it provocative? Does it cause you to have insights? Does it make you smile?"

"Does it help you understand your world in a slightly different way?"

Hennessey said he would go along with what the artist says about his work.

"The rubber duck is about itself. Period," the director said. "And I think it's magic."

"I don't understand how or why this works. But there's something about this duck that simply makes people happy."

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