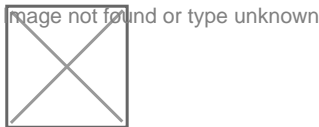


First pictures of extraordinary new flame-throwing crane at Glastonbury

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It started life 44 years ago, a 140-tonne crane lifting cargo on and off thousands of ships at Bristol Port.

But today, after an extraordinary transformation from industrial workhorse to cultural centrepiece, Crane 91 stands ready to amaze crowds at Glastonbury under its new identity at the heart of Arcadia's Pangea Stage.



As the first pictures of the new installation in action show, the light-beaming, fire-breathing, 50m-tall structure will create a spectacle like no other.

From a platform on the Pangea crane, DJs including Carl Cox, Annie Mac and Fatboy Slim will play to a 50,000-strong crowd, on a dancefloor ringed by huge speakers.

"The idea is to take over the sky," said Pip Rush, co-founder of Arcadia Spectacular. "That's what's special about what we do; there are 50,000 in our field but they all feel involved and near the action because we've taken over the sky."

It is able to throw flames higher than the surrounding hills, and Rush said they are considering having performers dangling from the boom.

"It'll be like a giant audio Stonehenge," he said, adding that it is their most ambitious engineering feat to date.

Arcadia's previous creation, a giant mechanical spider, bewitched festival-goers for the best part of a decade. But they are confident the new installation can top that.

Having looked as far afield as Russia for the machinery to create something spectacular, the pair found what they were looking for on Glastonbury's doorstep.

“We found this incredible piece of old infrastructure in Avonmouth. It’s a beautiful piece of Victorian engineering with a huge reach that can reach nearly all the way over an audience of 50,000.”

Bristol Port Company had decommissioned the crane because of advances in technology, and sold it to Arcadia. It was deconstructed at Avonmouth Docks in April, transported via police escort 30 miles to Glastonbury, and has taken more than a month to install on Worthy Farm.

A small team from the Port, including a technician who was an apprentice when the crane came into service, helped to teach the Arcadia crew how to work it.

Emily Eavis, festival co-organiser, expects it to be a new highlight of Glastonbury.

“It’s quite crazy and hard to describe, but it’s going to carry a moon and circumnavigate the Earth which is at the base of the tower,” she said. “It’s going to have fire and music, a whole line-up of brilliant music, and classic Arcadia pyro as well.”

After watching a preview on Tuesday night, Paul Osbourne, an engineer from Bristol Port Company who has been supporting the project, said: “I’m not sure I’ve ever seen anything as incongruous as a crane, complete with its 10-metre-deep pilings, plucked from industrial docks and planted in the middle of a field in Somerset. But having now witnessed it in action, I have to say it’s an incredible sight to behold!”

Meanwhile Festival goers have already been sharing their appreciation on social media.

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