

Artist Installs Nine-Foot-Tall Lollipop Along Venice's Grand Canal

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Desire Obtain Cherish, *Cherry Meltdown*, 2015. Courtesy UNIX Gallery and the artist.

Working under the alias Desire Obtain Cherish (D.O.C.), Jonathan Paul first made a name for himself in Los Angeles as a street artist. Now he's better-known for his conceptual, larger-than-life resin lollipop sculptures, satirical celebrity portraiture, and sharp but whimsical critiques of consumer culture and the art world. This month, coinciding with the Venice Biennale, D.O.C. makes a splash with *Cherry Meltdown*, prominently installed outside the city's Centurion Palace. The new steel sculpture is a nine-foot-tall, 600-pound version of his signature lollipop creations. We caught up with the artist to hear about his process and the importance of public art.

Artsy: Can you talk us through the process and production behind a work like this one?

D.O.C.: For my first version of Cherry Meltdown, the process started over a year and a half ago with a collector asking for six large Meltdowns (Blow Pops) for the garden of his house in Spain. That project is still ongoing. For this version of Cherry Meltdown [in Venice], the process began with a 3D scan of one of my UV cast resin sculptures to ensure an exact mold would be made. Next, I received samples of the finished surface. I wanted the stainless steel to have almost a plastic appearance, withstanding the elements of weather and sunlight.

I flew to New York a number of times to oversee the the first incarnation of the nine-foot sculpture: the casting of parts and the assembly and welding of the stainless steel. We needed to make sure that the drainage of rainwater would run off the base of the puddle of the Meltdown and not pool at the bottom of the sculpture: things you don't usually need to consider when making smaller indoor sculptures. Next was the engineering of the six-foot pole. After six months of work, the final piece looks and feels like an exact enlargement of my original sculpture.





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Artsy: Why did you decide to show this piece in Venice? Where is it located in Venice and how did its exhibition come about?

D.O.C.: When I started the project, there was discussion with my gallery UNIX that it would debut in a public space in New York. Then Daniela Mercuri, the gallery's co-owner, decided to reach out to Venice—and with the help of Bugno Gallery, we were able to secure an amazing location during the Biennale. It is at the Centurion Palace right near the Peggy Guggenheim Collection and across from Piazza San Marco.

It took a team of people to create a custom pedestal to rest on the steps and boats specialized with large cranes to place the 600-pound red Blow Pop on its perch at the edge of the canal. Bugno Gallery also met with the Murano glass master Pino Signoretto and began crafting custom Murano glass Meltdowns that will only be available through their gallery during the Biennale.

Artsy: As much of the art world and thousands of tourists visit Venice over the next few months, how do you imagine they'll feel upon seeing your work?

I believe art should be inclusive to the largest audience it can get. That is why public art is so attractive to me. Making others question what we see and what it means, perhaps, but more importantly to include women, men, teenagers, families, children, and different cultures to marvel at its presence. If it brings about smiles from the majority of them, I feel that my art has come to life.

—Bridget Gleeson