


[INDEX](#)

[REGION](#)

[BUSINESS](#)

[CULTURE](#)

[WOMEN](#)

[INTERNET](#)

[OPINION](#)

[LETTERS](#)

[YOUR WORLD](#)

[CENSORED](#)

Fingers off the paint! Chocolate art spells sweet success

Emma Charlton
AFP
April 18, 2005

PARIS -- If art is a question of taste, Australian painter Sid Chidiac, whose works are entirely made of fine Belgian chocolate, has given himself a head start in the popularity ratings.

When Chidiac introduces himself as an oil and chocolate painter, most people assume that they have misheard him.

In the past three years the 36-year-old has conjured up dozens of works from pure chocolate - complete with edible frame, canvas and richly-colored paint - portraits ranging from Marilyn Monroe to chat-show host Oprah Winfrey.

His tantalizing technique uses a rich blend of white chocolate - copiously donated by a major chocolate maker - and a range of simple food colorings.

Since his first work in chocolate in 2003, a painting of sunflowers with honeyed yellow hues fanning out from a heart of smooth dark chocolate, Chidiac has captured the public imagination with his alluring, ephemeral creations.

"People stop and stare at my work as if they have seen something truly different, something new," said the artist, who grew up between his parent's native Lebanon and Australia, and now lives and works in New York.

"They can't believe it is really chocolate and want to reach out and taste, just like when you look at chocolate sitting on a table," he explained.

The appeal of Chidiac's works, which are shown at chocolate fairs around the world, is such that they have to be cordoned off with stern "No touching, No tasting" signs, as organizers fight off constant requests to sample the paint.

While the paintings are fully edible - and a few have fallen prey to sweet-toothed art lovers - Chidiac says that they are not designed to be eaten, although he says that he cannot resist licking the brushes clean as he works.

But he says that the mediums warmth, its heady appeal to the senses, is what first attracted him to the alchemy of chocolate art.

Each portrait takes between one and three days to complete and can last several years if kept in the right conditions, away from strong light and humidity. One has even kept for 10 years.

Despite their relatively short lifespan, most of the chocolate works have been sold at auction to raise funds in support of child cancer patients in Australia and the United States.

Chidiac, who trained as an oil painter, first realized chocolate's potential while working in Sydney's hotel industry, where he helped a chef prepare for a chocolate sculpture exhibition.

It was only years later, after moving to New York in 2003, that he started to exploit its potential to the full.

Chidiac claims that several artists have tried to emulate his technique, which he keeps a jealously guarded secret.

"At every exhibition I get approached by chefs and artists trying to copy the idea," he said. "In



GREEK PROMOTION

[Ads by Goooooogle](#)

Ghirardelli

Chocolate

Retail & wholesale chocolate, white & caramel syrups. Bulk powders.
www.eurocafeimports.com

Chocolate

Fountain

Find, compare and buy Nutrition! Simply Fast Savings
www.Shopping.com

Assorted Toffees

Special toffee assortment. Huge selection of candy available too!
www.candydirect.com

Rent A Chocolate

Fountain

Find Local Fountain Rentals Fast - Free Chocolate Fountain Directory!
www.ChocolateFountainS

New York an artist even came up to me and asked how to get the chocolate to stick to the canvas."

He explains that he stumbled upon the recipe for chocolate painting relatively easily, saying that it came as "a real surprise".

"When chocolate is processed from the raw cocoa, a number of things are taken out - I just put everything back in," he said, giving away a single clue.

He says that the medium does have constraints, however.

"There is a limit to the number of colors I can make," he said, adding that he was looking at ways of expanding his chocolate color range.

Chidiac admits that chocolate has provided him with a shortcut to success, helping him stand out on the crowded New York art scene and attracting the sort of intense media attention invaluable to any young artist.

"Chocolate is helping me move forward so quickly in life", he said, explaining that chocolate fairs draw large crowds, sometimes as many as 100,000 visitors, a massive audience compared to conventional art galleries.

He plans to branch out from portraits into other themes, including a series of paintings - in both oil and chocolate - depicting the ancient tales of Lebanese mythology, to be housed in Lebanon in a museum shaped like Noah's Ark.

Chidiac has shows scheduled in Warth, Austria on April 21 to 24, in North Hollywood, Los Angeles on May 14 to 15, in New York on October 22 to 25 and in Paris on November 10 to 13. His work can be seen at www.sidchidiac.com.



[E-Mail this article](#)



[Print this article](#)

Copyright © 2005 News World Communications Inc.

[Privacy Policy](#)