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# Out There

A street-smart guide to New York news and newsmakers Time Out New York / Issue 548: March 30–April 5, 2006

## A matter of taste

Sid Chidiac's paintings appeal to the eye—and the sweet tooth

The mysterious allure of Sid Chidiac's paintings isn't obvious at first glance—it's more the first sniff that sets them apart. "People press their noses up against my work all the time," Chidiac says. "Sometimes, they'll even start rubbing their tongues against my paintings."



Photo: Sarina Finkelstein

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Most artists would sell their souls for that kind of attention, but when your medium is rich Barry Callebaut Belgian chocolate, there is a certain built-in animal attraction of audience to art.

Australian-born and Lebanese-raised, Chidiac has been working in edible pigment since arriving in New York in 1993. By mixing melted chocolate with powdered food-coloring, he achieves the proper shades to render likenesses of Marilyn Monroe, JFK and ol' Honest Abe Lincoln. As long as they are kept out of sunlight and handled delicately, the portraits can last a decade or more.

Once some baggage handlers at London's Heathrow Airport didn't realize how delicate their cargo was, and Chidiac got back a smashed Marilyn Monroe chocolate portrait. So he did what any devastated artist would do—he ate the remainders. "I had her lips in my mouth," he remembers. "She was not only very beautiful, but she tasted pretty good, too!"

Much to the disappointment of chocoholic art lovers, Chidiac prefers to keep these portraits off the retail market, and uses them instead to draw buyers to his more traditional oil paintings. Still, no matter how well or poorly his other work sells, the painter has the comfort of knowing that as long as his studio is piled with mounds of white and dark chocolate, he'll never be a starving artist.—Justin Rocket Silverman

See more of Sid Chidiac's work at [www.chocolatepainter.com](http://www.chocolatepainter.com).

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