

Warren, Chocol-art-ier Extraordinaire

185 people had already been through the doors of the University Club before I arrived, all to take part in the vernissage of Warren Laine's "No More Words" Chocolate Art Exhibition. This is more than people than the University Club has ever seen before and constitutes a major success on the part of all involved in the exhibition.

My first impression as I took in the chocolate sculptures (figuratively – they are randomly inedible, containing such hazards as broken glass, sand and the like) was of being in a museum, transported back some thousands of years to look at one of the sculptures hewn of rock or clay into the goddess of fertility or another deity. But no, this was chocolate, as I'd never seen it before.

People had come from as far as Hamburg to view in the vernissage, which greatly pleased the artist amongst others, as one of the main goals of the exhibition had been to prove it is possible to draw people to the University Club, and Bremen-Nord at large. All donations to the exhibition go to IUB Kids (see picture at right of Warren and Petra Lietz, representative of IUB Kids, holding the bouquet presented to Warren in recognition and thanks for the donations).

As an inside quirk of information, the inspiration behind the concept of "No More Words" is Werner Heisenberg's essay on the theory of language, in which he explains the inherent difficulty of attempting to explain an impression using words and language, in this case "capturing the fluid moment just before the decision 'to be' is taken" (according to Warren) as "words confine you to what other people understand of the words"; hence, No More Words.

Warren started using chocolate as his medium in 1993, when (being the accomplished chef we know him to be) he was cooking with chocolate, and realized how perfect the fluidity, then cooling, and finally setting of chocolate would be as an art expression.

To hear Warren speaking of the sculptures is a pleasure, as he gets that light in his eyes and speaks more impassionedly about them than I have seen most artists when explaining their creations.

He explained in detail one set of sculptures to me, that for over three months of time he gradually dripped chocolate into a yellow post box, allowing different layers to form and employing different techniques according to...whatever. Then with one chisel blow he separated the piece in two, and they became an attacking and defending side, the former with broken glass embedded in its side, the latter with thick cotton rope wrapped round it. Luckily the break happened cleanly and as he had hoped it would, as with chocolate you can never know where the fault lines and weak points lie, one of the beauties and dangers of this medium.



The installation involves pieces spread out on high tables on both floors of the University Club, and for the vernissage Diana Chioreanu and Ileana Selejan performed a modern art reading of the play *Alice in Bed* by Susan Sontag (Diana playing the part of Alice James, sister of Henry and William James), in a setting using both a melted mound of chocolate vaguely resembling a volcano, as well as chains, wooden planks and candles.

I am sure as well that all, especially students, enjoyed the complementary wine and champagne, as well as the Hachez chocolates freely available at the Hachez stand (Hachez being one of the most notable chocolatiers in Germany).

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