



Artists hijack Trump campaign bus for Dumbo exhibit

By Dennis Lynch
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t.Rutt

Partisan artisans: Mary Mihelic (pictured) and David Gleeson have turned one of Donald Trump's former campaign buses into a rolling anti-Trump art installation, which will park in Dumbo on July 30.

This exhibit is gonna be huge!

One of Donald Trump's former presidential campaign buses is heading for Dumbo's Smack Mellon gallery on July 30, but the two people behind the wheel are not supporters of the billionaire Republican — they have turned the bus into the country's biggest, classiest rolling art installation against the candidate. Artists Mary Mihelic and David Gleeson are circling the country on a mission to foster dialogue with Trump supporters and Trump opponents, and both camps are giving the contentious project plenty of attention, they said.

"Every time we stop we get people that come up and talk to us — both for and against Trump," Gleeson said. "Yesterday we were walking back to the bus at a gas station in Tuscon [Arizona] and this bearded hippy motorcycle-looking guy came up and got really close and in my face and said 'So this is an anti-Trump bus? Well then f--- you!'"

Gleeson and Mihelic, who use the artistic name "t.Rutt," have painted a period in between the "T" and "R" of Trump's name on the side of the bus and changed the painted slogan into "Let's Make Fruit Punch Great Again," but many people still mistake the bus for the original thing. Anti-Trump drivers frequently give the pair strong middle fingers while on the highway, and vandals have attacked the bus with eggs, ketchup, and spray paint so many times that they now camouflage the sides of the bus overnight.

But also acts as a magnet for supporters of the New York billionaire who believe they are finding fellow Trump-ers, they said.

"If we said we hate Trump we'd never talk to any Trump people," Mihelic said. "The emotional flip that people have when they realize its anti-Trump, that moment when they change, you realize you can change people's thinking through art."

Mihelic and Gleeson purchased the bus for \$14,000 on Craigslist. The Donald's campaign bought the former bachelor party bus — with the stripper pole still installed — when the candidate was stumping across Iowa before the Feb. 1 caucuses, then returned it to its previous owners, who sold it on.

The artistic pair have driven the bus to primary election states across the country, performing provocative pieces at each stop, including waterboarding the bus in response to Trump's claims he will reinstate the practice if he makes it to the Oval Office.

"We tie it down with cinder blocks and water, put a towel over the front, get on top, and dribble water over it," Gleeson said. "As funny as it sounds, it's a little off-putting to see the water pouring down like that, because that's what really happens."

The pair hope to meet a welcoming crowd at Smack Mellon at the end of the month. The appearance will be just nine days after the bus rolls Republican National Convention in Cleveland, Ohio — assuming the bus makes it out in one piece.

"T.RUMP Bus" at Smack Mellon [92 Plymouth Street between Main and Washington streets, (718) 834-8761, www.smackmellon.org]. July 30 at noon, July 31 at 3 pm. Free.

Reach reporter Dennis Lynch at (718) 260-2508 or e-mail him at dlynch@cnglocal.com.

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