

THOMAS DANE GALLERY

Cait Munro, 'Artist Creates Chocolate-Covered Room, Invites Visitors to Lick It', *Artnet*, June 2, 2014



Anya Gallaccio, *Stroke* (2014).
Photo via The Independent.

According to the *Independent*, it took Scottish artist Anya Gallaccio three days to coat the walls of an old farm building at Edinburgh's Jupiter Artland with chocolate—almost 90 pounds of it, in fact. "It's quite hard to keep on the brush, and soon it's up your arms and all over your face," Gallaccio said of the installation process. "At first, everyone starts eating it and they think it's really cool to lick their fingers. But the smell becomes intense. Gradually you try harder and harder to be more careful and avoid your mouth because it becomes repulsive. I don't eat chocolate for a while afterwards." While you'd expect the experience of entering a chocolate room to weigh heavily on the tastebuds, Gallaccio's *Stroke* installation acts on all five senses.

Gallaccio used 70 percent cocoa, confectioner-quality chocolate (the same kind used to craft handmade truffles) and invited visitors to get physical with the piece—licking, touching, and stroking the walls in a Willy Wonka-esque free-for-all. The space is dark, sensual, and as she says, "painterly... you can see the marks." The artist added, "I kept it neutral because some people love chocolate and some people hate it. It's quite a blank open situation for the visitor to occupy in any way they wish."

Does all this sound a little familiar? That's because in 1970, Ed Ruscha covered the walls of a gallery with sheets of paper silk screened with chocolate at the Venice Biennale. However, thousands of anti-Vietnam war protesters etched messages into the work, and it was eaten away at by a swarm of Venetian ants. Gallaccio herself has a long history of working with organic, often edible materials, and this is not her first time using chocolate. In 1994, she created the same installation for Blum & Poein Santa Monica. You can watch a video of Gallaccio installing and discussing her delicious work at Complex.

"Stroke" is on display at Jupiter Artland, Edinburgh until July 14.