

LigoranoReese

RNC 2016: A melting American Dream highlights artistic responses to Republican convention

By Laura DeMarco
July 19, 2016

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Local Cleveland artist Garie Waltzer, photographs the 'American' part of the ice sculpture "The American Dream" created by Nora Ligorano and Marshall Reece outside the Transformer Station museum in the Hingetown neighborhood, in Cleveland, Ohio on July 19, 2016. It was a day of art and politics, including collaborative films, a Truth Booth by Cause Collective, music, ice cream and a symposium. (Chuck Crow/The Plain Dealer)

CLEVELAND, Ohio – The American Dream was melting Tuesday.

Literally. After all, it was 86 degrees outside. And this American Dream was made of ice.

The 4,000-pound "Melted Away" ice sculpture by New York artists Nora Ligorano and Marshall Reese was a provocative statement on the state of the nation, "highlighting the erosion of opportunity and social equality."

It was one of several thought-provoking artworks created in response to the Republican National Convention on display Tuesday at the Transformer Station gallery in Cleveland's emerging Hingetown neighborhood.

The ice sculpture, which the artists will re-create in Philadelphia at the Democratic National Convention, was unveiled at 12:30 p.m. "People reacted to it very emotionally," said Ligorano. Many took the time to go up and run their hands over the chilly words.

By 1 p.m., a significant amount of ice had melted. Ligorano expected much of it to be gone by 5 p.m. (See a live stream here:<http://meltedaway.com/category/the-american-dream-project/>.)

Also on display at the Transformer Station was the Truth Booth, a project by New York's Cause Collective.

Visitors could walk inside a large white inflatable sculpture in the shape of a cartoon speech bubble with the word "Truth" printed on the side and record their ideas of "truth." The videos will be collected for a multimedia project.

"People have had mixed reactions," said Cause Collective member Will Sylvester. "Some people are a little bit nervous; other are excited by the opportunity to use their voices."

Musician-artist Nathaniel Paul Hoff was using his voice to perform on top of his car — a car he is trying to take to all 50 states to allow the public to write messages of unity upon it. He calls it "The Unity Collective Car Tour." Ohio is state 39.

The 2002 Volvo, with nearly 275,000 miles, was covered in messages such as "You are worth it" and "Walk through the door God opens."

"We're trying to show that we have a lot more in common than different," said Hoff, standing by his wild wheels on West 29th Street.

Inside the Transformer Station, the City Club hosted a panel on "The American Dream: A Symposium at the Intersection of Art and Politics" at 1 p.m. with a collection of local artists and writers.

The film series "The Fixers" -- by Cleveland artist Kate Sopko with filmmakers Robert Banks, Angela Beallor, Chelsie Corso, Tom Laffay, Elizabeth Press, and Paul Sobota -- was also playing from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. The documentaries highlight a side of Cleveland conventiongoers will likely not see in person, from inner-city poverty to food deserts.

Places where the American Dream is melting, quickly.