Eat Whipped Cream Off a French Guy at Frost Art Museum's Francophile Exhibit

By Cultist  
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When most people hear the term "Tour de France," they think of the 2000-mile long international bicycle race.

But after witnessing Tour de France/Florida: Contemporary Artists from France in Florida's Private Collections at Florida International University's Patricia & Phillip Frost Art Museum on Saturday January 21, images of sweaty, possibly chemically enhanced cyclists will be replaced by the lingering memory of a marathon French art event in which a grown man is smeared with cherry-flavored cake ingredients.

"This is going to be an event on cherries," explains Martine Buissart, curator of Tour de France/Florida and event coordinator for the French consulate in Miami.
While the majority of the nine-and-a-half hour event, which includes panel discussions by cutsyotd, artists and collectors, will revolve around the museum’s exhibition of French art found in private Florida collections, French artists Joël Hubaut and Jacques Halbert will sweeten the pot with their performance piece called "Life Is a Bowl of Cherries."

According to a scenario draft prepared by Halbert, a painter and performance artist who apparently has been obsessed with this small pitted fruit since 1975, there will be chanting faux-protesters carrying cherry signs, accompanied by cherry-themed songs, dishes, and drinks served up by blue pajama-clad waitstaff -- in addition to 20 red balloons and at least one blow gun. Audience participation is also encouraged, with attendees invited to wear cherry-decorated clothes and jewelry.

The climax will occur during dinner, when Hubaut, a mixed-media artist, will turn Halbert into a cherry cake.

"The public is invited to dip cookies into the creams covering me," Halbert states in his scenario. "These cookies will be in a basket near me."

Also appearing at the symposium are artists Bertrand Lavier and Dominique Labauvie; collectors Elizabeth Lyman and Marvin Sackner; and Raul Valdes-Fauli, president of the France Florida Foundation for the Arts.

Tour de France/Florida runs from 10 a.m. to 7:30 p.m. on Saturday, January 21, at the Frost Art Museum, on FIU’s Modesto A. Maidique Campus, 10975 SW 17th St. The "Life Is a Bowl of Cherries" performance starts at 6 p.m. Tickets, which include lunch and dinner, are $50. Discounted tickets for FIU students with valid student ID are available for $5. Space is limited; RSVP by January 18 with Jessica Lettsome at 305-348-1899.

-- Erik Bojnansky