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New Sculpture at Bustling Midtown Intersection Devours Automobile

Newly-Arrived "Autoeater" Represents Latest Public Art Project from Midtown Alliance

ATLANTA – June 30, 2017 – The arrival of a 16-ton marble sculpture devouring an automobile at one of Midtown Atlanta's busiest intersections has everybody talking.

Say hello to *Autoeater*, the new art piece standing watch over the northeast corner of 10th and Peachtree Street. Made from timeless Carrara marble and paired with the Fiat Panda, a popular mass-produced Italian automobile from the 1980s, the sculpture invites comment on Atlanta's relationship with the automobile in the context of one of the city's most walkable urban districts.

Autoeater is the newest addition in Midtown Alliance's growing public art program that features temporary art installations throughout the district. Midtown Alliance is a coalition of business and civic leaders working to create an exceptional urban experience in Atlanta's Midtown district, including everything from small street-level activation projects to large-scale transportation enhancements.

In late-2016, the organization issued a request for proposals from local, national and international artists for a new piece of temporary art at the corner of 10th and Peachtree Street to succeed the *Rockspinner*, a 22,000 lb. granite boulder mounted on a rotating base. Members of Midtown Alliance's public art committee helped review the proposals and selected the *Autoeater*, created by German artists Venske & Spänle. The artists began collaborating in 1991, and have developed a reputation for their enigmatic marble sculptures, which have been shown in museums, galleries, art fairs and public art projects worldwide on five continents. In Atlanta, they are represented by Marcia Wood Gallery.

"The world-class reputation of the artists and the craftsmanship of this piece reinforce Midtown's commitment to high-caliber public art," said Ginny Kennedy, Midtown Alliance Director of Urban Design. "The playful and unorthodox form of this sculpture will engage the public and spark interaction at one of Midtown's most prominent intersections."

The piece was shipped to Midtown from a marble quarry in northern Italy, near Tuscany. The marble comes from the same quarry that was a meeting place for major artists from the 50s and 60s such as

Henry Moore, Hans Arp, Joan Miro, and, notably, Isamo Noguchi, the artist who designed the modernist playscape in Piedmont Park in 1976.

The smooth marble form of the base is juxtaposed with the machine-made body of the Fiat Panda. Introduced abroad in 1980, the Panda was designed as a cheap, easy to operate, no-frills utility vehicle for city driving. The three-door model, with a two-cylinder engine, epitomized practicality. As the Italian counterpart to the iconic Volkswagen Beetle, the Panda is one of the most popular cars in automobile history. Driving a Panda was part of an alternative lifestyle in the youth of the artists, now long past.

Autoeater was brokered for Midtown Alliance by Marcia Wood Gallery and will be on display in Midtown for a three-year term. The installation sits on property owned by the Dewberry Capital Corporation, which leases the temporary park space at 10th and Peachtree Street to Midtown Alliance for \$1 per year.

“I am thrilled that the world-class work of Venske & Spänle has found a home in Atlanta,” said gallery owner and director Marcia Wood. “Midtown Alliance understands the value that provocative public art can add to the culture and vibrancy of a city, and I applaud their vision and commitment.”

Travel expenses for the artists have been sponsored by German culture institute Goethe-Zentrum Atlanta. Goethe-Zentrum will host an event on Wednesday, July 5th from 6 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. featuring a short presentation from Venske & Spänle to discuss the creative process and development of *Autoeater*. The public is invited to attend and can RSVP at www.Goethe.de/Atlanta.

For more information about Midtown Alliance’s public art initiatives, visit MidtownATL.com and follow Midtown Alliance on [Instagram](https://www.instagram.com/midtown_atl) (@midtown_atl), [Twitter](https://twitter.com/MidtownATL) (@MidtownATL) and [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/midtownatl). The public is invited to post pictures with the *Autoeater* on these social media channels using the hashtag #autoeater.

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About Midtown Alliance

Midtown Alliance is a non-profit membership organization and a coalition of leading business and community leaders – united in our commitment to Midtown as a premiere destination for commerce, culture, education and living. Guided by a visionary master plan – Blueprint Midtown – and in partnership with the Midtown Improvement District, our mission is to improve and sustain the quality of life for those who live, work and play here. Midtown Alliance accomplishes this goal through a comprehensive approach to planning and development that includes initiatives to enhance public safety, improve the physical environment, and strengthen the urban amenities that give the area its unique character. Learn more: www.MidtownATL.com

About the Artists: Venske & Spänle

Julia Venske and Gregor Spänle, born in 1971 and 1969 respectively, live and work in New York and Munich. They began collaborating on artwork in 1991. Their sculpture and installation work has been shown in museums, galleries, art fairs and public art sites worldwide on five continents.

Using brilliantly pure white marble, the artists transform the material from hard blocks into sensuous shapes that melt, fold, dissolve, flow and wiggle. Light bounces off the highly polished surfaces of the biomorphic forms, emphasizing the inflated curving lines, folds and creases that evoke living forms.

The work references pop-culture as well, having been inspired by the cartoon characters they grew up with, the Smurfs, while the pristine play of form, line and light speak to minimalism. Working with a classic material expertly by hand, Venske & Spänle bring each piece to life with meticulous carving and labor intensive sanding and polishing. The artists subvert the expectation of the viewer by suggesting objects that are light, soft and malleable, while concealing at first their origins of weight and mass.

About Marcia Wood Gallery

Marcia Wood Gallery represents contemporary artists of exceptional merit who range the spectrum from ground breaking young artists with emerging careers to internationally established masters. The criteria for inclusion in the gallery program is an artist's rigorous commitment to contributing compelling work that is pertinent and critical in today's contemporary art arena. For over thirty years the gallery has presented important contemporary art to Atlanta and been a vital part of the city's cultural scene. Learn more at www.marciawoodgallery.com