

Singer George Michael, partner bring edgy art to Dallas

By Jamie Stengle

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DALLAS — A bit of Britain has arrived in Texas, thanks to English pop star George Michael and his Texan partner Kenny Goss.

The couple have begun displaying the edgy, contemporary British art they have collected at their sleek gallery in the city's hip uptown area.

"We want to expose the Dallas art community to work that they've quite potentially never seen if they weren't able to travel — these works that in some ways may be a little controversial for one thing, a little strong, but let's face it, art a lot of times is about sex, love, death, loss," Goss said.

Through April 30, the Goss-Michael Foundation's gallery is showcasing works by British artist Damien Hirst, including his "Saint Sebastian, Exquisite Pain" — a black calf encased in a formaldehyde solution, its body pierced with arrows.

"Most people initially freak a little bit about Sebastian; then they stare and stare at it and they say, 'That's the most beautiful thing I've ever seen,'" Goss said.

The show, curated by Hirst,



'The Incomplete Truth' is one of several works on display by British artist Damien Hirst at the Goss-Michael Foundation in Dallas. The foundation aims to help educate the public about art.

also features "Bitterness," which at first looks like a textured canvas and then reveals itself to be composed of dead flies in resin. Another piece shows a dove caught in flight in a formaldehyde solution.

What began in 2005 as a gallery featuring art for sale morphed in June into a non-profit foundation.

Because one of the foundation's goals is to help educate the public about art, Goss said,

he's been thrilled with the number of young people who come to the gallery.

"They sit in front of these pieces. They sketch it. They write about it. They think about their thoughts. I've come

here before, and I've seen four or five students just sitting on the floor writing," he said.

There is a library in the gallery open for researchers, and there are plans for lecturers in the fall, said Joyce Goss, the foundation's executive director and Kenny Goss' sister-in-law.

The foundation will award two \$5,000 scholarships to students at Booker T. Washington High School for the Performing and Visual Arts.

There are also two more \$5,000 scholarships offered, one for Dallas-Fort Worth-area students, the other for students statewide.

The foundation is also sponsoring an art contest this spring for area high school seniors with the theme of abstinence. The first-place winner gets a \$1,000 savings bond.

"We're here for the community, not just to show our art," Kenny Goss said.

The work of Hirst — a kind of rock star of the art world — has brought everyone from art students to parents and children.

Goss and Michael, who have been together for about 12 years, split their time between homes in London and Dallas.

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