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# Christopher Brosius Unveils His Latest Fragrance

By CRYSTAL MARTIN



The scene at Christopher Brosius' unveiling of his latest fragrance, 'Do Not Ask Me Why 406', with Paintings by EmeraldWhipple. Courtesy of Dau al Set

In a subterranean lounge on Manhattan's Lower East Side, perfumer Christopher Brosius unveiled his latest creation, Do Not Ask Me Why 406. The fragrance was designed as part of his CB I Hate Perfume collection to evoke the "rich, slightly floral" scent of opium smoke. Brosius presented his work in experiential fashion: Six sheer panels hung parallel to each other were spritzed lightly with Do No Ask Me Why. When viewers looked through the panels, they saw and smelled Brosius' interpretation of opium smoke. "It occurred to me ages ago that one reason perfume isn't seen as an art is that it has no real physical presence. You can't hang it in a gallery or perform it in a concert," said Brosius. "The challenge has been how to anchor it in place so that people can take it in without giving them too many visual clues."

Brosius' olfactory art piece was part of a one-night exhibition, *Artificial Paradise*, inspired by poet Charles Baudelaire's writing on opium and hashish. "I'm much more interested in the experience of scent — not just the pretty aspect," said Brosius. "It makes sense to me that presenting fragrance as an experience is really much more about art than it is about fashion or beauty." Dancer Jenna Pollack, painter and jewelry designer Emerald Whipple and mixed media artist Jake Stollery also participated in the exhibition, which was curated by event-production company *Dual Set*.

Brosius rose to beauty industry prominence in the Nineties with the fragrance line *Demeter*, for which he developed a large catalogue of scents that conjured very specific moments and experiences. That style of design became his calling card. He launched a new perfume collection *CB I Hate Perfume* in 2004.

Though Brosius said he has never smelled opium smoke, he meticulously researched its scent in order to create *Do Not Ask Me Why 406*. "Opium is not something that one has immediate access to. So kind of like some of my other scents — musk, for example — this is my imagining of what the smell may be like. Smoky and slightly floral." Brosius had been working on the scent for months, when he was approached to do the exhibition.

"I'd been doing a little bit of research and seeing what I could come up with on a description [of the scent]. Based on that, I pieced this composition together." At the scent's unveiling, Brosius confirmed that friends who had a more "intimate" knowledge of the true smell of opium smoke gave his work the thumbs-up for accuracy. *Do Not Ask Me Why* will be available for purchase on the *CB I Hate Perfume* Web site in the beginning of December and will be priced at \$200 and \$100 for 100 ml. and 30 ml., respectively. The fragrance's absolute formulation will be \$200 for a 10-ml. bottle.