

# Moby at Gallery Z's ArtMobile



Got art? Berge does, and not only in his Federal Hill Gallery. Now he has branched out with Moby the ArtMobile, which houses a variety of international and local art. I sat with Berge Zobian at his Gallery Z to discuss his remarkable concept and learned more about the man behind the mobile mission.

**Carrie Decker (Motif):** How did the whole concept of “Moby” get started?

**Berge Zobian:** I’ve been in the art world for more than three decades and noticed there was a gap in our communities and neighborhoods that lacked art resources and galleries. It was a dual process of bringing art to people who didn’t have access to the art world, but also as a public art concept. I wanted to bring it to a variety of public resources including schools, elderly housing and church groups.

**CD:** What types of mediums do you exhibit?

**BZ:** There is 23 to 30 feet of linear exhibition space plus pedestals and countertops that have displayed just about every type of medium. We have done everything from paintings to sculptures, pottery, video and short films. The only submission we don’t accept is digital photography. All works are original. For the past seven years there has always been a theme with each showing. We cover the why, where and what is it for. For example, each April we cover youth day that focuses on education to children and teens from ages 8-18. One particular subject was genocide, an education piece. We exhibited books, literature, pamphlets, art and propaganda. The learning experience was captured with artwork dedicated to genocide, with an emphasis on learning. We have done seafood festivals and exhibited nautical pieces. It’s a multi-faceted exposure with various themes and art on display.

**CD:** Tell me about the Moby and its unique design.

**BZ:** It is a former Federal Express truck that was unveiled in 2012 named by my daughter. It’s an aluminum box truck that we equipped with a French Walker Hanging System. *(A system with rod sleeves attached to either aluminum or wood molding on walls with hooks that move art at various levels)*. The interior has a dry bar, hardwood floors, sound system, projections and moveable track lighting. We can project from inside out and outside in. There is lighting in both the interior and exterior and it is equipped with several monitors and sound/alarm systems. The truck is hand-painted red to match our logo. We have 30 sponsors that have contributed to all the amenities with Moby. There is a coffee machine on board! One sign designer has created 70% of the vinyl letterings throughout, and

we added a bar code on the left side that takes you directly to our website.

**CD:** Where does Moby travel?

**BZ:** Moby has traveled to synagogues, churches, non-profits, schools, education centers, festivals, libraries and nursing facilities. We normally don't travel beyond a 25-mile radius of the gallery.

**CD:** Are there challenges?

**BZ:** Yes, there are challenges! We have changed our ways and learned through experience that we aim to please our audience and have substituted some of the original artwork with signed prints. We have priced effectively and diversified some of our inventory. Now we can advertise that lower- priced gift items will be available for sale. It's always a learning project. Some other things noted are, with a box truck, there are terrain bumps and movement of items that are not secured while in motion. We use bungee cords and have designed specialty countertops for displaying items to limit motion while en route. We also noticed when several people enter the truck from the front and exit through the rear, there is motion and movement within the truck. We have added stabilizers to reduce any type of truck movement when parked. Our generators have been replaced with quieter decibels, (*60 or less*) for noise reduction. We have also learned about cables and circuit breakers. If the electric is off, the GFI could be reversed and shut everything down and/or cause everyone to lose power. We had one experience with that, but we have fixed the problem! There is always a learning curve, but we try and stay on top of everything as we go along. As for distances, we are looking forward to branching out to the country to set up at local fairs and camping facilities. My goal is to reach these venues this summer or next year.

**CD:** Does anyone ever ask for food?

**BZ:** No, but Moby does go out at night and we are looking to tap into the commercial end in the future. We would like to host private dinner engagements for up to four couples in the truck, complete with seating, chandelier and local catered food that fits the art theme of the evening, eg, Eastern European art. Anyone could rent Moby and use the space for fine art and fine cuisine right in the comfort of their home or office area.

*Studio-Gallery Z, 259 Atwells Ave, PVD; 401-454-8844; galleryzprov.com*