

# **The Opioid Spoon Project**

# HOMAGE TO DOMENIC ESPOSITO'S OPIOID SPOON PROJECT



"The Spoon ... is a symbol of solidarity for those struggling and those lost, and a warning for those not yet enslaved. It calls out, 'You are not alone.'" -Esposito

Portraits by Amadeus Finlay and Will Stiles; Spoon Photo Courtesy of Domenic Esposito

On February 7, Domenic Esposito delivered a handmade, larger-than-life spoon with a burned bowl to

the sidewalk in front of Rhodes Pharmaceutical in Coventry. Rhodes is not the first pharmaceutical company to receive such a delivery, and it won't be the last. The first was Purdue Pharma, which is owned by the Sackler family and manufactures the highly addictive painkiller OxyContin. Rhodes also is run by the Sacklers and is one of the largest producers of generic opioids. After Esposito dropped his spoon in Coventry, he spent some time talking with us about the idea behind his demonstration.

**Motif:** Why do you bring these spoons to pharmaceutical companies?

**Domenic Esposito:** We're trying to expose the web of influence that big pharma has had on the opioid crisis.

**Motif:** The Opioid Spoon Project's mission statement talks about exposing the truth. What is the truth?

**DE:** For us, the truth is that a handful of large pharmaceutical companies have lied about the addictive power of these drugs and have made huge profits from them. It's sort of unfathomable how deep the tentacles of big pharma are, and we're slowly exposing the components. You've got lobbyists, politicians and the medical community involved. We've found close to, in and of themselves, 20 foundations that are paid for or supported by opioid pain producers. Basically the FDA uses these foundations as consultants. It's probably not illegal, but it's a huge conflict of interest.

**Motif:** What's your ultimate desire?

**DE:** I would love to see some of these pharmaceutical companies be held accountable for what they do. I don't have the recipe to fix what's going on, but I think we need to demand justice for how we got here as a society, whether it's huge fines or some jail time.

*Motif was so inspired by Esposito's project that with his blessing we created a project of our own. Check out the back page to see the faces of local people who support his work. To read our full interview with Esposito, go to [motifri.com/esposito](http://motifri.com/esposito)*