

## 'Suicide' sculpture of Damien Hirst causes controversy in Spain

Spanish sculptor's depiction of British artist shooting himself in the head shown at art fair in Madrid

- [Giles Tremlett](#) in Madrid
- [guardian.co.uk](#), Wednesday 18 February 2009 12.



4 the Love of Go(I)d by Eugenio Moreno. Photograph: ADN Galeria

It is [Damien Hirst](#) with a bloody hole in his head – the richest bad boy of British art finally turned into a piece of half-pickled art himself.

Spanish artist Eugenio Merino's sculpture, which shows a Hirst figure pointing a gun at himself and blowing his own brains out, is meant to be a comment on the British artist's own £50m diamond-studded skull, *For the Love of God*.

Merino has called his piece "4 the Love of Go(I)d", suggesting that Hirst's attempts to increase the value of his own work would only be enhanced by his own death.

"I thought that, given that he thinks so much about money, his next work could be that he shot himself. Like that the value of his work would increase dramatically," Merino told *The Guardian*. "Obviously, though, he would not be around to enjoy it."

Merino's work, displayed in the sort of glass case that Hirst likes to fill with formaldehyde and dead animals, has been on display at Madrid's ARCO art fair.

"It is a joke but it is also paradoxical that if he did kill himself his work would be worth even more," said Merino. "That is a metaphor for the current state of the art world."

Merino said that many people thought the work meant that he hated Damien Hirst, when in fact he was a great admirer. "I am a fan. I studied him at art school. I'm just adding my own little grain of sand," said Merino, who devoted the rest of his ARCO show to parodies of Hirst's work.

These included a football split in half to expose the inside of a skull and brain called "Hooligan's Anatomy" after Hirst's own anatomical works.

Hirst may have set records with his diamond-studded skull and the recent, credit crunch-defying £111m auction of his work, but Merino is not himself averse to money.

In fact, the Hirst money-making magic seems to have rubbed off on him. His 4 the Love of Go(l)d has been snapped up by a buyer from Florida, reportedly for \$41,000 (£28,800). All his other Hirst spoofs have also been bought at ARCO, going to collectors in Holland and Portugal.

"The art market is bad but actually this year has been spectacular for me," the 33-year-old artist said. "It is ironic. I've never sold so much."

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/artanddesign/2009/feb/18/damien-hirst-suicide-sculpture-eugenio-moreno>