

>> Dzine in his East Pilsen studio

YOU SHOULD KNOW . . .

Dzine

Meet Chicago's only face in contemporary art's most prestigious showcase, the Venice Biennale. **BY JEFF HUEBNER**

TWO DECADES AGO, Carlos Rolon was spray-painting graffiti murals on city walls and earning a reputation as the king of street art. Yet the Columbia College dropout harbored grander ambitions. "I want my name to be seen in museums 800 years from now," he told a reporter in 1992.

Since then, the Brighton Park-bred

artist, 36, has become a global phenom. Known by his street name, Dzine (pronounced "design"), his psychedelically colored paintings and murals have shown in Paris, New York, Tokyo, Vienna, and his native Puerto Rico. Notables like Eric Clapton buy his work at prices up to \$22,000.

Despite a recent exhibition at the

Chicago Cultural Center, Dzine doesn't think hometown institutions take him seriously. "I'm just happy the work is recognized, overall," he said one recent morning at Humboldt Park's Flying Saucer, near the graystone he shares with his wife and two kids. "Here in Chicago—in due time."

Dzine's time might

be coming, as he is the only Chicagoan in the upcoming Venice Biennale. But don't look for him in the U.S. Pavilion; at the invitation of Peter Doroshenko, the commissioner of the Ukraine Pavilion, Dzine is one of four "outsider" artists giving their perspective on what it means to be Ukrainian. After two trips to Kiev, Dzine

spent \$60,000 customizing a ski boat into a "low rider" decked out with videos and music exploring the country's culture. "It's 'pimp my boat,' Ukrainian style," cracks Doroshenko.

Dzine hopes the boat will end up in some museum's collection. "I need to remind myself why I was hungry 15 years ago," he says. "It's not about *ch-ching*." ■