It's schmeer love between an artist and N.Y.C. bagels

BY TEQUILA MINSKY

Swedish artist Hanna Liden is paying a very visible homage to the New York icon, the bagel, in her two-part installation called “Everything in The Village.”

Unveiled last month, a stack of five super-size bagels (including sesame, pumpernickel, everything and plain) are piled 17 feet high in Ruth Wittenberg Plaza, at Sixth and Greenwich Aves., while another bagel stack, plus a lone gigantic sesame, are in Hudson River Park at the Christopher St. entrance. The bagels in the central Village are there till Aug. 24, while the ones on the waterfront will stay up through Oct. 20. The project is under the aegis of the nonprofit Art Production Fund.

Liden’s inspiration came from the composition for a photo she exhibited last spring: She spray-painted a stack of bagels — which looked vaselike — with a tulip in it. She, in turn, chewed over the large-scale bagel project for about a year.

“I like how, with a sculpture, it’s more of a physical experience compared to if you stand in front of a framed thing that’s flat on the wall,” she said.

The artist used industrial styrofoam, polyurethane, steel and paint. Each poppy seed and every piece of onion and garlic was carved individually and attached to the bagels by hand.

Liden had her first bagel when she moved to New York 17 years ago.

“It was on a park bench in Abingdon Square Park on Hudson St. in September 1998 — plain with lox,” she recalled. “I got it in a shop in Meatpacking that is now long gone,” she said, not entirely sure of its name. Sounds like Dizzy Izzy’s.

For the “models” for her jumbo-sized bagels, she used “lots of different ones, some from Manhattan, some from Brooklyn.”

As for favorites, the artist likes the bagels in the bodega downstairs from where she lives.

While she made this installation for this show, it potentially could travel to “possibly Brooklyn or Tokyo,” she said.

In parting words about the New York starch staple, Liden said, “The bagel has a beautiful shape. I love New York.”

William Kelley, executive director of the Village Alliance business improvement district, said of the central Village bagels, “We are happy with the sculpture — it is temporary after all. Mostly, we are responding to feedback that asked us to use the space for temporary art from time to time — the Department of Transportation’s public art program approached us and we agreed. ... What’s more New York than a bagel after all?”

After the sculpture comes down, the plaza will be reconstructed and enlarged, after which the BID’s planters, tables and chairs will return.

However, not everyone was bullish about getting “baged.” Minerva Durham contacted The Villager back in June, alarmed that she had heard the bagels would be coming to Petrosino Square in Nolita. But a Parks Department spokesperson said then that it was “early in the process,” adding, “Looks like it won’t happen in Petrosino.”

With reporting by Lincoln Anderson