

DESIGN GALLERIST

RARE & UNIQUE PRODUCTS



Sebastien Leon Agneesens is a New York-based French musician and installation artist, among other things. His pieces are dynamic and he works with sound and movement creating pieces that are truly stunning.

Read our interview where he reveals a bit more about him-self.

A · Firstly, can you tell us a little bit about yourself?

People often get confused when I tell them what I do. I am a creative director, a designer, a curator, a sculptor, a composer, a performer, a painter, and to me it's all kind of the same thing. These fields complete each other and each offer a specific way of sharing ideas, telling stories, addressing issues and also hopefully of communicating beauty.

I develop my commercial projects (experiential design, exhibition design and production) under my company Formavision and carry out my art projects (mainly sound sculptures, paintings and sound installations) under Studio Sebastien Leon.

Originally from France, I have been based in America for the past thirteen years, and it is hard to dissociate my story from New York. In France I always have to justify what I do according to what and where I studied. In New York however, what matters is rather the relevance of my projects, my curiosity, so I feel like I constantly have to push and reinvent myself and explore new disciplines.



B · What's your favourite part of the design process?

My favorite part of the design process is anchoring my concepts into historical or cultural roots in order to start a dialogue with the people who are going to interact with it. I also like making a project immersive so that one can get lost in it.

C · Please tell us more about your art and design background and what made you become an artist and designer?

Aside from Formavision, I have been developing Studio Sebastien Leon a few years ago for on my own art projects, all offering a physical experience of sound and music.

D · Where do you get inspiration?

It is hard to pinpoint where I get my inspiration, but i would say it helps to be in a meditative state of mind. It is when i feel connected to my surrounding that I am the most inspired. When in New York, it means feeling connected to the people around me opens my mind to ideas and creative conversation. When I am in nature, it is plants, rocks, trees, animals, the sky, the ocean that inspire me.

E · What was the movie or book that impressed you the most?

That was Apocalypse Now. I saw it downtown New York on Sept. 11th, 2001. I was completely lost that evening and the movie theatre on Union Square was showing movies for free. All screenings were full except for Apocalypse Now obviously. It was the director's cut.

There is a moment between two heavy war scenes in which Martin Sheen stops for the night at a sophisticated French plantation on the river. The scene feels completely disconnected from reality, like a floating doomed dream amidst the war, and it really spoke to me at that time, when reality was just too hard to comprehend. Movies and books are most relevant when they address something you are going through in your life at the time you see/read them.



F · Can you describe your style, how has that style developed over the years?

I came to realize that a lot of my work feels mineral and vegetal in its appearance. Mineral because I think that crystals inspire me through the purity of their shapes, their depth of their materiality, their variety, and probably because of the mystery that shrouds them. Vegetal because I find some intelligence and purpose in the hypnotic repetition of cell structures, imperfectly geometric in their shape, and forever able to grow into a colony.

G · What are you working on at the moment?

I am about to unveil a 35-store tall sound sculpture in Istanbul called the Golden Horn. It climbs a residential tower, and look like somewhere between a French Horn and a plumbing system. It carries the sounds of the building (the bazaar, the parking garage, the elevator, the lobby...) and delivers them at random locations. It is tuned in a key so that at any moment all the tracks work together as an improvised symphony.

H · For you what makes a product rare?

An edition of 1 makes a product rare.

By extension, the fact that a product is hand-made, with imperfections, makes it rare.

I · What would people be surprised to learn about you?

After a few years making sound installations and sound sculptures, I discovered that my family had for centuries been involved in making organs for churches around Europe. Could this be in my genes?