

What quote or motto do you live by?

I find a lot of inspiration in Latin phrases. They must have a time-honed simplicity and truth to have lasted this long. And the fact that they are in Latin let's you focus entirely on its meaning, without the intrusive contextual baggage the words may have in English, for example. In reality though, there's no single phrase I particularly live by. Life seems a little too complicated and fluid to follow one set of wagon ruts.

I'm mostly inspired by everyday human behavior and particularly in those behaviors that seem irrational or antiquated. The world is fixated on the consequence of our actions, but to me, the behavior that causes those actions in the first place is much more interesting. I guess the best way to describe how I try to approach life is to see the world as a newborn would. Strip away the context and forethought and simply try to enjoy what is amazing and intriguing in the everyday. This helps me to reassess my ideas again and again.

The upcoming issue of Nu Mode Magazine is entirely in monochrome. As someone who has also worked in black and white, how do you feel about the absence of color?

Color is an interesting phenomenon. Ask a scientist if black and white are colors and he will most probably say black is not a color, but white is. Ask an artist and he will probably say black is a color, and white isn't. I think withholding color can carry just as much meaning as using multiple colors. Color is simply energy in context. It is energy from one source, bouncing off another. Zipping through your eye, where it changes again, before finally arriving in the brain, where it gains meaning.

Color allows artists to drape visual input with meaning, coat it in context and saturate it with additional content; unlocking associations that have previously been stored in the brain. Transmitting any idea visually - simply - should make use of the viewer's own 'onboard data' as much as possible. Using specific colors can unlock or repurpose experiences and memories the viewer already has. This way the final idea isn't just something that has been transmitted from one mind to another, but is created equally. *Art is a partnership.*

Many of your creations require extensive testing or chemical processes.

How would you describe the relationship between science and art, particularly in your work?

The world of science fascinates me. I can completely lose myself in learning about certain scientific phenomenon. I believe science creates the foundation for my thinking; it's an ever-growing human language that reveals the patterns in our universe. We have a relatively short lifecycle, so it makes sense that we need a uniform system to simplify things and pass on discoveries in an easily understandable format. This allows us to progress from one generation to the next. I feel that these systems generate perspective, offer humans clarity and purpose. At the same time, I realize everything can only be based on the information we have gathered so far. And it is quite clear we don't really know that much about why we are here. *I like to think there is more to it than simply surviving long enough to procreate.*

Within my work, science adds another layer of information. It generates depth and enhances a view or statement. It can be a tool or an integral part of the art piece or story I'm trying to project. At the same time, I really like working with scientists as they have such a different way of seeing our world.

How do you respond to critics who question the validity of your work?

Can you prove that a piece such as Ecce Animal is truly made out of cocaine and not just another replacement substance?

I think it is good to be critical. I am a harsh critic myself. Executing an idea is a long, laborious and often very expensive process for me. I am - probably to my own detriment - pretty obsessive in my pursuit of perfection. For me execution, fabrication and production is an art in itself. A 'piece' might be a grand comment on society. It may be well thought through - hopefully it's intriguing - but when it is time to turn it from concept into real world creation, I have a switch of mindset. I shift from the conceptual artist to a neurotic craftsman.

I could invite critics over to “sample” Ecce Animal to give their “expert” opinions on the purity, but I don’t own it. And I’m sure if I did make that invitation, many more ‘critics’ would suddenly be ‘going on the record’ as well. As for proof, I worked with experts from a renowned laboratory, very talented and dedicated scientists. They were invaluable to the process and all of their reports, findings and results are published on my website.

How does an artist as you acquire the funds to produce works created out of extremely expensive material such as gold, diamonds, and coke?

I don’t know how others do it, but mostly for me it is: Dedication, meticulous planning and creativity. I take years to fund and complete my projects. Sometimes I look back and wonder how I actually managed to do it. My work is where my money, time and effort go. It’s what I do.

Despite the theme of luxury in some of my work, my own lifestyle is not overly luxurious. My biggest patron until recently has been myself, but thankfully things are changing. The commissioned work I have created lately was funded upfront and happily that trend seems to be continuing. Having more money to execute my ideas hasn’t changed them, but it does get them out into the world faster.

Explain the importance of the poetry that often accompanies your work?

I like to see my descriptions as an artist statement. For me, the object itself is never the whole ‘piece’. I’m not trying to communicate a single idea or induce a specific way of thinking. What I hope to provide with each statement is a focus. To establish an ‘arena for thought’. This arena offers people a way to explore and reflect on their own ideas. The object is an icon at the center of that arena. The statement is a gateway. I want to invite viewers to become part of the work, to be drawn into the thinking but then come to their own truly considered opinion.

Ultimately, what kinds of questions do you want your art to bring up?

The messages and questions differ from piece to piece. Recent work involves the idea that we are continuously bombarded by forces of propaganda designed to influence the way we think and behave. Each of my pieces is a 'thinking process in progress.' Essentially, each piece is an exploration of these propagandistic narratives and the truth they may be obscuring.

My central message is simple: "question everything" and "think for yourself". It sounds contradictory, but my work embodies my thinking, not my personal agenda. I'm not trying to make anyone agree with me, but if they do, I hope it is only after critical thinking of his or her own.

Is there anything you're working on now that you can tell us a little bit about?

Any upcoming projects you're allowed to divulge?

Yes, my next project focuses on Power Intoxication. Excessive appetite for power poisons the personality, and allows us to do unacceptable harm to others. It highlights the imbalance in equilibrium between our inner animal and its cage, society.

George Orwell said it beautifully: "Always, there will be the intoxication of power, constantly increasing and constantly growing subtler. Always, at every moment, there will be the thrill of victory, the sensation of trampling on an enemy who is helpless. If you want a picture of the future, imagine a boot stamping on a human face - for ever."

I think we can keep that from happening.