



Q&A With Artist, Alex Proba

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IT'S HARD TO PUT YOU IN A BOX. MURALS, RUGS, FURNITURE, SCULPTURE... WHO ARE YOU, WHAT'S YOUR BACKGROUND ?

I am from a family of doctors. When I was about sixteen years old, I studied as an exchange student in Ohio where I learned to appreciate art and craft more than other time in my life. I started drawing, painting and experimenting with materials and objects. I felt something special when creating. After I came back home to Germany, I didn't stop creating.

My parents thought of my newfound creativity as a hobby but I didn't. But when it was time to decide on a career, I initially chose the expected route to become a doctor. After spending some time in the sciences, I started to explore the world of spatial and graphic design as well as product and furniture. And I feel so incredibly fortunate to have chosen the path that's right for me and I feel very lucky to be able to do work I love.

But what actually happened was that I've started my career by getting into med school. Very quickly I've realized that medicine wasn't the path I truly wanted to take and so I took my chances and followed my heart by applying for design school in Hamburg, Germany. And then it just fell all together from there. It was the best decision I've made.

I've studied spatial design undergrad which was a mix of architecture and graphic design. And then I went to study contextual design (furniture & product) at the Design Academy Eindhoven.

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COULD YOU DESCRIBE YOUR CREATIVE PROCESS?

I think that even though “I do it all”, from graphic, art to furniture and product, it all comes from the same spot. The beginning is the same, it is within me. My form of expression translated to different mediums. I try to do things that make you happy and that might make someone else happy as well. My daily routine is to check on family and then go on a small hike with my puppy Sam, then look at what is on the schedule and start working on things. I try to add one thing a day to work on that I just want to do for no reason. But other than that i don't really have a process.

WHERE DOES YOUR INSPIRATION COME FROM? DO YOU DREAM OF SHAPES, COLORS AND LINES AT NIGHT?

I am first and foremost a visual designer/artist and all my creations are supposed to evoke an emotion. My work is a celebration of color and pattern which I would see as a positive stimulation of the senses.

That said I do try to not be inspired from other visuals then what the everyday gives us. It can be sounds, smells as well as memories.

Sometimes all I need is a phone call with my grandmother to get my creative flow going. There is no process that I use to be honest, I am a maker at heart, and when I create I'm extremely happy. I try to create every single day, even if it's only sketches of my ideas, at least it's something. Sometimes there are moments where I use my creativity as personal therapy, sometimes when I am stuck with a project or an assignment I try to switch gears and create something off topic for a little while. A process would break me.

HOW HOTEL JUNE VIBE, BRANDING, NEIGHBORHOOD ORIENTED THE CREATIVE PROCESS AND THE FINAL ARTWORK?

It was a great experience to work alongside the team at Studio Collective and the Hotel June team to bring their vision of the whole space to life and complement it with my custom mural and area rug. The inspiration was to create a calling and almost sunset feeling kind of piece of art in earthy and warm tones that just lift up the mood when seeing it. I think we were successful—the space looks beautiful.

WHY IS THE LARGE-SCALE ARTWORK SO APPEALING?

I do have a background in interior architecture and furniture design so I almost always have an intense urge to bring something to life. Everything starts with 2D sketches for me anyways and to take that sketch and make it something real and tangible fulfills me and makes me happy. Same with mural work, even though it ultimately remains 2D but bringing it to a large wall or an object it makes it alive for me. When translating something to a three dimensional object you need to consider all angles equally. To have a successful piece it needs to be beautiful and work from all sides, and all angles. That is probably the most fun part of the process to take a 2D drawing/design and apply it to the real world. How does the backside of a 2D design actually look? :) You tend to spend hours (over)analyzing each element. Not just the shapes but also the patterns/textures have their own challenges—bringing them to life is equally challenging but the outcome is even more gratifying.

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