
Tony Seker



Dynamic Artists of Contemporary Art

Tony Seker is a multicultural artist, originally from Beirut, Lebanon. His abstract painting style largely stems from his childhood refugee experience. After fleeing the Lebanese Civil War in 1975 he abruptly dispensed of the camouflage colors used on his model warplanes and, in protest, began to apply bold & colorful paint. In retrospect, the familiar medium became a comfortable way to express his despair and anti-war sentiment. Today his art continues to express aspects of his past with the consciousness of the present and the hope for a more peaceful future.



Congratulations for being selected interview artist. Could you please share us the meaning of your artist name Claxon Du Soleil?

Thank you for the opportunity to share my art with you. Claxon Du Soleil is a name that I created to represent my artistic expression. It reflects my spirit and also connects with my past. Loosely translated from French it means a blast from the sun. However, claxon is actually a loud horn sound, as from an automobile. The story behind it is a long one, but I will summarize it. My birthplace, Beirut, Lebanon, was once credited with two world records, one of which was the city with the greatest rate of car honks per square kilometer.

And during those days as a child playing in the street, I used to love these honking sounds and all the noises of Beirut; people bustling at the outdoor bazaars, street vendors coming through neighborhoods singing and clanking objects, chickens clucking and so on. It was as if the universe was frenetic, yet incredibly synchronized. My artistic expression comes from harnessing the explosive beauty of humanity found in that symphonic madness. Hence, Claxon Du Soleil!

Your works includes some of genius people like Andy Warhol and David Bowie. Where do you find your inspirations?

Creatives from all disciplines are undoubtedly a lubricant to my own self-expression. We are after all the sum total of our experiences. Inspiration is all around me every day. When knowledgeable people talk about my art, they often refer to my abstract style as “action”, “emotional” or “intuitive” painting. I was not aware of such terms when I started to paint as a kid. It was simply what I felt in me that was coming out naturally. But these descriptions actually make a lot of sense to me now. I remember watching famous performers such as Victor Borge, Bruce Lee and Peter Sellers and then channeling their physicality into my being. This animation most definitely transferred into my artistic expression and it is still my practice to leverage the energy around me, only with a broader range and bolder vocabulary.



Did you change your style over the years and which way?

I wouldn't say that I have necessarily changed my style consciously, but perhaps broadened my expression. If you look at the breadth of my artwork there is a range that can probably be classified into style boxes, but I'm not a fan of categorizations. I'm after all the same instrument producing the art. I recognize that curious people do want to 'figure art out' and abstract can be particularly ambiguous. I appreciate their curiosity, but I typically prefer to talk more about how my art fits into global consciousness rather than on the production details of a specific work. Each painting is a tiny part of a larger tapestry that I put out into the universe in the hopes of strengthening humanity's bond. I describe my process of painting as being very similar to a writer who rapidly jots down their best ideas on the fly, works through multiple drafts and then eventually presents a final copy. Sometimes my 'story' is simple or concise, and at other times, more like a novel with many chapters. Sometimes the story is a mystery and sometimes the genre can be comedy or adventure, but it is almost always very colorful! In terms of styles, when collectors describe my art they will most often mention Gerhard Richter and Jackson Pollock, which of course is a great honor. Ultimately my abstract art is akin to instrumental music where you just have to feel something for it rather than rely on the lyrics to tell you what it is about.

You have many awards and publication from all over the world and attend many exhibitions. Which one is most special for you?



All honors for my work are hugely appreciated. And I suppose they could go to my head. But I try to keep an even keel, to know that the ups will come as well as downs. Just last year I was invited to exhibit in France. I was quite excited for that honor and to travel to Paris for my show. However, as a result of Covid, my paintings sat quietly in the gallery which eventually shut down permanently. While I was disappointed, I reminded myself that there is always someone else experiencing greater loss. So, in its way, as a life lesson, this non-event was also special.



Your approach seems effected by Lebanese Civil War. What do you think about wars as an artist? Do you have any mission to share with audiences? What do you feel about that?

I feel we are all born into random conditions that we had nothing to do with. For example, the country, language, religion, quality of education and health and even our parents are possibly handed to us at birth. Growing up in a country which was in a perpetual state of war, and then having to abandon it overnight, left a profound mark on me as a person and an artist. From the day that my family escaped, I wrestled with many questions. These were framed by the notion that I could easily have been one of the unlucky children left behind to live in a war with little hope for a bright future let alone to survive. But I also wondered what if my parents were different? I could have born somewhere safer in the first place.



As a result, my art purposefully combines two elements; design and randomness. And throughout my work is an inherent message of resilience because the remainder of our lives are susceptible to our own influence and design.

Ultimately I want to illustrate that there are people suffering around the world simply on the basis of their place of birth, and perhaps we can help them or at least be more compassionate towards them. As far as war itself, I very easily imagine what it is like to be on either side of a conflict because of what I have gone through and my world view on chance. Ultimately, heroes are those fighting on “your side” of a border, but global citizens need to strive for borderless solutions. My painting “Soldier of Misfortune” is one where I really immersed myself into this conundrum, where soldiers honorably risk their lives out of duty, yet they never seem to be the winners.

Did you enjoy cooperating with us? We have many international art festivals around Europe. Do you like to join us?

There is a commonly used phrase “think global, act local”. If my art can help in a small way to reach more people to think global, then I must continue to pursue international art shows. I look forward to collaborating again in the near future!

