

ARTIST ROBI WALTERS [INTERVIEW]

Photo by Sherie Wilkowitz | Art, Artist Interview, Arts & Culture, Editor's Picks, Featured, Interviews | 0 0 0 0



Robi Walters is a London based artist who has his own gallery and studio space in the heart of Soho. His mesmerizing, colorful collages have attracted celebrity collectors such as *Thelma Houston*, *Mazin* from the *Philly* and *Miguel Lacer's* *Diplo* and *Jillbratne*. In 2017 Robi presented a piece to Olympic gold medalist *Usain Bolt*. Music is a powerful influence and he has collaborated with several renowned musicians including *102, Mary J Blige* and *Sir Paul McCartney* in order to raise money for charities.

He was recently *Aston Martin's* Artist in Residence. He utilized unused materials from their production process and created innovative and provocative works of art. He is collaborating on special projects with *Aston Martin's* Chief Creative Officer *Mark Reichman* and for the *Aston Martin Residences* in Miami which will open in 2022.



Aston Martin Residences

2 Michelin-starred chef *Tom Kerridge* recently commissioned three of Robi's pieces for his new London restaurant, *Kerridge's Bar & Grill* in the *Carondelet Hotel*, including two bespoke table tops made out of menu people had saved as souvenirs.

Robi's most recent collaboration is with *Formula 1*. He's been a fan since he was a boy and deeply admires their spirit of pushing past boundaries and innovation. Watch this space.

Robi made his first sculpture out of the contents of his recycling bin over a decade ago. The piece was conceptualized when he started to think about human consumption, sustainability and the effects of consumerism. Riffing through the bin and pulling out old cereal boxes, he began cutting panels before arranging them into an exuberant 1,000 petalled lotus, constructed in line with the rules of sacred geometry.



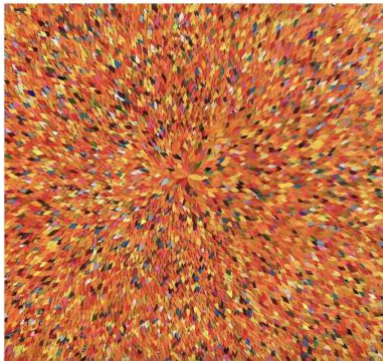
The mesmerizing, socially-charged pieces are born from sacred geometry, exploring inner space and the calm he seeks in his daily meditation practice. Over the past decade, his oeuvre has communicated the art of transformation, employing discarded materials to create a unique commentary upon consumerism, consumption and waste.

Robi's artistic practice echoes his own life. The process of taking discarded objects and making them beautiful and 'wanted' reflects the spirit of transformation with which he has turned his own life around. He has opened his own studio and gallery in Soho and continues to break past his own boundaries to make his dreams reality.



WORK-IN-PROGRESS

In this series with multi-faceted artist Robi Walters, recycled materials are cut into thousands of tiny, hand-cut panels, which are then painstakingly layered into thousand petalled lotus shapes, a spiritual ode to enlightenment. His work not only displays dedication to the medium-vegetation involved but the creator, but also to the sense of effort and calm he seeks to engender in the viewer.



WHAT IS YOUR PREFERRED MEDIUM?

I work in many mediums. My main body of work is collage which utilizes recycled card and spray paint. I use a lot of abandoned or discarded material in my work. I also do paintings using acrylic and spray paint. When I was a teenager, I absolutely loved graffiti. It was so fresh and a way to share with your friends what you could do.

WHO IS AN ARTIST THAT INSPIRES YOU?

One of my favorite artists is a friend, *David Laundy* who also gave me some amazing advice that went on to inspire me on my biggest projects. He told me to paint every single day. In 2011, I started doing art that I'm based on my *'365 Every Day Counter'* project. I've been in my own gallery space in Soho (London) since 2017. My studio space is downstairs. It's allowed me to take the next steps in my career.

DO YOU HAVE A FAVORITE PIECE THAT YOU HAVE CREATED?

That is a difficult question. Normally my favorite artwork is the one that I'm working on. Even if the art is really small, I don't see it as less important as my big pieces. I had to choose my *'365'* from a word that I would be the one I finished but year when I was in isolation. It was my company for 10 days and I found an attachment. It's a 100cm x 100cm that collage named *'The One That Got Away'*.

IS THERE A SPECIFIC EXPERIENCE THAT STANDS OUT TO YOU, EITHER TRANSFORMING YOU AS AN ARTIST, OR JUST A SPECIAL PROJECT?

In 2019, I became the *Aston Martin Artist in Residence*. During this time, I was fortunate enough to meet and worked with their Chief Creative Officer, *Mark Reichman*. I took the premium discarded leather from their production process and created works of art from them. I even made some pieces in the shape of the *Aston Martin* wings logo.



IF YOU COULD TRAVEL ANYWHERE IN THE WORLD TO SEE A FAMOUS PIECE OF ART WHERE WOULD IT BE?

The place that always stood out to me in LA. I have visited many cities in America but not LA. There is some great art there! I also have some incredible friends based in LA who would be able to show me around and that's important to me. Sharing is caring.

WHAT IS YOUR CREATIVE TRUTH?

As mentioned, I was once advised to create artwork every day. This gets you into the practice of always being creative. I have been doing this for over 10 years now. Accumulated small steps create big things. Much like the process of the *Aston Martin Residences* currently being built in Miami. Also, find something that motivates you. If it motivates you, you keep going and going. It's important to not go beyond your own comfort zone. For example, doing something your inner voice says you can't, showing someone something you have created. Most importantly ask for advice on things.

WHAT ARE YOU WORKING ON NOW?

I'm currently exhibiting my *'365 Every Day Counter'* in my gallery. 300 books that I've hand painted, so each one is an individual piece of art. I'm also in the process of turning them into NFTs which will be available to buy any soon. My latest exhibition is currently showing with *Aston Martin Residences*, the first luxury residential development by the British automotive company under construction in downtown Miami. The creative team has produced a *Virtual Art Gallery* that resembles from the physical art gallery will look on the 33rd floor. Visitors to the *Aston Martin Residences* can walk on all four gallery levels to enjoy a collection of work being exhibited that started in March and will be finishing by the end of the month, entitled *'This is Home When You Get There'*. This is my first 'virtual art gallery' which allows in very realistic and abstract from the physical gallery artwork when the project is completed at the end of the year. The *Aston Martin Residences Virtual Art Gallery* provides a virtual access to everyone who wants to experience my work and collectors by other established and emerging artists. This exhibition follows the previous virtual access by fellow artists *John Larson*, *Aaron Schwartz* and *Falco Meza*. I've also created my own expression of the *Aston Martin Residences* building that is a colorful collage made from recycled card that is based on sacred geometry.

HAVE YOU ALWAYS BEEN INTERESTED IN BEING AN ARTIST?

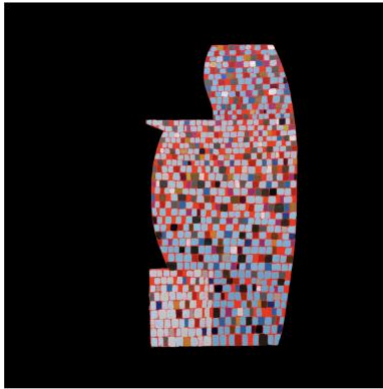
Since I was a young boy I have been interested in art. I was a huge fan of graffiti which was emerging up. Now I see that incorporating my life's art which makes me very excited. Things people art is so fun. There is something to the creation of art that makes me so excited.

WHAT IS ONE OF THE HARDEST CHALLENGES YOU FACE AS AN ARTIST?

Time to go out.

WHAT IS ONE OF THE MOST REWARDING ELEMENTS YOU TAKE AWAY FROM DOING WHAT YOU DO?

I receive a very special feeling when others get excited about my work, especially when someone buys my work and hangs it on their wall. The other thing that I find rewarding is that time stands still when I'm creating.



WHAT IS ONE QUALITY YOU FEEL IS KEY IN SUCCEEDING AT YOUR CRAFT IN TODAY'S CREATIVE LANDSCAPE?

Stay true to yourself. There is something going on in the creative field that it can be distracting. Don't try and copy someone else. Find your own voice, your own style and then put it to work.

IF YOU COULD MEET ANOTHER ARTIST (DEAD OR ALIVE) FOR A DAY, WHO WOULD IT BE?

If I could meet another artist and spend the day together that artist would be *Vincent van Gogh*. I think because of his passion and energy. I would try and talk him into trading some art I would want his work for the value, I would want it for my kids and give it on to my kids who would love to share it. I find van Gogh's perspective, I think it's incredible and it's a great and a great man.

WHAT ADVICE CAN YOU SHARE WITH OTHER ARTISTS ABOUT WHAT YOU'VE LEARNED FROM YOUR JOURNEY?

We can be inspired by others but ultimately, we have to take the advice, we take that that step constantly. That you get and inspire. Through the passage of time, we are being discarded and separated from ourselves. Take back control and go for it. Like *Steve Jobs* said: "We are all making it up as we go along." We have to be better questions to be our best selves.

FOR SOMEONE WHO IS NEW TO DISCOVERING ART, WHAT WOULD YOU RECOMMEND ON HOW TO EXPLORE THE POSSIBILITIES OF WHAT IS OUT THERE?

With art and particularly if you're considering investing in art, I recommend doing your research, but buy what you love.

HAVE YOU BEEN FORTUNATE ENOUGH TO HAVE A SHOWING, PERFORMANCE OR MORE?

I haven't had a showing performance before. I was meditating for over 22 years and is one of the most important practices in my life. When I do workshops with children or adults, I start the workshop being a group meditation which always something. It's a performance.

WHAT HAS BEEN YOUR BIGGEST "WOW" MOMENT IN YOUR CAREER AS AN ARTIST?

Seeing my first artwork with a *Markie* London gallery was a very special moment. Which was with the gallery called *Westhouse and Dodd*. I received a call saying, "we're new here and we'd love to see your work." I was at a show in *The Barbican*. The moment was, "we had our own show, but we're just and your art work at the *Art Space* in *Barbican* art fair, we got your art work in a collection book." I was so happy and when I saw *The Tate Britain*, and I received a letter saying they had just sold another one of my artworks. That was a very special moment.

TELL US AN INTERESTING STORY ABOUT YOURSELF THAT YOU HAVE NOT ALREADY COVERED IN THE ABOVE QUESTIONS.

Something that I have really got in the last few years is old water. I take a cold shower Monday to Friday and weekends on Saturday and Sunday. The benefits from this are increased metabolism, better skin and also it helps me to jump in a cold river or the sea whenever possible. It helps with my immune system, my skin, digestion, sleep and focus. A simple way to start to take a hot shower and for the last part about cold water for working as you can and see how you feel after.