



**CACAO
ROCKS**

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a Rebel or a LEADER?



Truth is, when it comes to art, no one can -or should- put labels.

Every artist tries to communicate their inner world through their art whether that is paintings, sculptures, photographs or songs.

Every human being carries their uniqueness in a way that most of his/her co existing humans will never understand. And this is the greatness with art. The moment when you meet an artist that can express your soul in a perfect way. The moment when you understand that you share a special bond and that you "click" perfectly. Just like love. The moment that this painting in front of you was shaped just like you had imagined it and you take it home with you because you want to be able to enjoy it every day. To look at it and feel full. To look at it and remember that you are not alone.

Cacao Rocks is a controversial artist. With no doubt.

He started his journey at a very early age- we could even say that he was born an artist. His talent was noticed and embraced by his family. Having a father who has been very famous for his work in sculpture, he was raised "within" the art.

Cacao Rocks holds a very interesting history, having accomplished so many things in his life despite being very young in age.

He was only 14 years old when he heard about a graffiti competition on a radio show and he decided to take part. Just like other kids, he expressed his inner world on concrete, using spray paint as his tool. Things went well for him and he came first for his drawings.

He finished school and decided to move to Athens in order to attend University where he decided to study French Literature as his mother is French and he already shared a special bond with the language.

His studies went well and he graduated but he never stopped loving the graffiti, which he continued doing as his hobby and a way to escape the everyday routine.

In the third year of his studies, he decided to travel around Europe, he needed to see the world. By visiting different countries, he noticed something new, something that immediately changed his thoughts. Graffiti in Europe had become more artistic as he says, more beautiful, so more people can understand and relate to it. The era of the graffiti being an angry imprint from an underaged person was over and the acceptance of the street artist was a reality.

Cacao Rocks returned to Athens in 2009, after having travelled the world and he was full of excitement and a strong desire to contribute with his own way so people in Greece would feel more relaxed with the idea of street art.

He then decided to "dress" the town with artistic cartoon paintings, which he used to paint on large paper and then to hang them as posters. As he needed to create his own character through his art, he decided to use only three colours : pink, green and blue. His three favorite colors at that time.

Going on with his life, he then graduated from the University with a degree in French Literature and started working in the French Institute, having an administrative role. This of course, could not fill the life of an artist as he needed to express his feelings through art. Any kind of art. For this reason , he took part in a video art competition where he got the first prize which was a scholarship for video art and photography at the Focus school in Athens.

He took these courses which he is grateful for to this day.

He was painting and exhibiting his art. He can recall "growing up" through art and separating with art life into periods. The first was the "Pink period" where pink used to dominate the biggest portion of his art. He used to love the brightness of the color and the happiness that it brings with it.



Later on, he was asked to participate at an exhibition at Benaki Museum , a museum full of History and culture. He decided that he should look more mature and he decided to use blue as his signature colour.

As the economic crisis had hit Greece, in 2014 he decided to move to Germany. He talks about this period of his life with a bitter sweet smile.



He admits that leaving Greece, his home and his friends made him realize how much he loved Greece. His life in Germany was not as expected, it used to rain a lot and Cacao Rocks used to stay inside, listen to Greek music and paint. Paint for Greece as a way to express how much he missed his country. The colours used were: gold, blue, black, white and grey. And this is his artistic identity today. He says that gold is found everywhere in the Byzantine era and blue is the colour of Greece.

In 2017 he received a huge honour of painting the basketball court of Antetokounmpo's basketball Academy, which he founded for the children that do not have the financial capability of joining other academies. Cacao Rocks had created a portrait of Yiannis Antetokounmpo when Yiannis was at the beginning of his career. When Antetokounmpo decided to found this Academy, the people from Nike approached Cacao Rocks and asked him if he would be interested in painting the court in Ampelokipoi. In 2018 he was awarded with the "Art Works" award from the Niarchos Foundation for his contribution to art.

Cacao Rocks has been approached by Universities from abroad for his contribution to art and he has been asked to give lectures in the University of Michigan in the faculty of Art. He still today passes his experience and knowledge through Skype calls to different Universities.

Although he doesn't really enjoy travelling that much, he recently visited Kardamyli, a sea front area close to Peloponnese, where Sir Patrick Leigh Fermor, a



The beat of his HEART takes shape in his art and he feels free only through creation.

2nd World War hero once lived. Sir Paddy Fermor as he is also known, is a British author, scholar and soldier who played a prominent role behind the lines in the Cretan resistance during the Second World War. Cacao Rocks inspired by this brave man, created two art pieces and he donated one of them to the Benaki Museum.

With Greece celebrating 200 years of independence, many festivities took place throughout the land, with one of the most significant, the presentation of the art exhibition "History has a face" supported by the municipality of Athens, which included 22 portraits of heroes of 1821, out of the 320 that Benjamin Mary crafted from 1839 to 1844. Cacao Rocks participated with one of his one-of-a-kind portraits with the colors of Greece: blue, gold and white.

His plans also include an exhibition in the art gallery of Tinos with the Grand Opening set for the 19th of June but due to the Corona virus, the schedule is flexible.

He is also getting prepared for taking part in different exhibitions with the first coming up on the island of Tinos, the 4th Small Biennale Contemporary Art in Mountados on the 24th of July.

When I asked him why he decided to become an artist his answer was simple and clear. He had to create things with his hands. The feeling of giving "birth" to a new life quenches his thirst for fulfilling the purpose of his existence – as to him, to exist you have to create.

This is the person behind the colourful and dominant pieces of art that distinguish him from other artists.



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