

RON AGAM BIOGRAPHY

Painter Ron Agam is in the full bloom of a second artistic flowering. Following a successful career as a fine art photographer, he now finds himself enchanted by a medium that, while deeply familiar, had long lain dormant.

It was only when instinct and circumstance led him to take up a paintbrush three years ago that his passion for the medium awoke. With literally hundreds of works realized since, there is little doubt as to the currency of his talent.

Born in France in 1958, Ron was raised between Paris and Rehovot, Israel, and spent his formative years subsumed in the world of art—making it, photographing it, contemplating it. Later, his passion for photography would lead to an acclaimed career in that medium, but clearly, the seeds of his current flowering as a painter were sown in a childhood that was never distant from the studio.

Arriving in New York in the 1980s, Ron wove himself into the fabric of the art world, founding an art press, and opening the Artlife gallery in SoHo. In 1994, his debut monograph, At the Wall, garnered wide acclaim for its penetrating photographs of the ultra-orthodox inhabitants of the Mea Shearim neighborhood and the daily rituals of the Western Wall. Displaying a profound sensitivity to the spiritual overtones of the human condition, this work was quickly embraced by collectors and galleries around the world, and launched an active career as a photographer.

RON AGAM BIOGRAPHY

In 2001, galvanized by the events of September 11th, Ron rushed to the scene of the disaster and shot over 1200 photographs, capturing the simple heroics of people caught up in the sweep of history. Now housed in the permanent collection of the 9/11 Memorial Museum, this body of work stands as an intimate, indelible, deeply human portrait of history being made, person by person.

In 2009, Ron presented In Full Bloom, an influential and acclaimed photographic study of flowers. Represented on a vast scale, Ron's portraits of these most intimate of Nature's creations contextualize both ecological and metaphysical concerns, and have earned broad accolades. At first glance a departure in subject from his previous monographs, In Full Bloom reveals itself, on closer inspection, to share a fascination with the ineffable and a sensitivity to the role of mystery in the human condition that reflects back on Ron's earlier work, illuminating it in turn.

In October, 2009, as a capstone to this photographic career, and in recognition of his humanitarian and bridge-building work throughout the Jewish communities of France, America, and Israel, Ron was given France's highest civic recognition: Cited for his, "key role in establishing a relationship of trust and cooperation between France and the Jewish community in America," Ron was made *Chevalier* of the Legion of Honor.

And yet, by his own admission, this extraordinary career ran aground in 2010, when, faced with the prospect of completing a highly sought-after commission (a photo-book

RON AGAM BIOGRAPHY

for the luxury goods giant LVMH), Ron abruptly abandoned the project. This instinctive, some-would-say reckless act, effectively disoriented his life, stranding him in the desert of his own intuition. Working through a depression, he revisited the deepest fundamentals of his creative spirit: He picked up a crayon, and began to draw.

From the moment of this re-birth to the present day, Ron's artistry has, like the Euclidean universe, expanded ever outwards, in the process yielding hundreds of new works spanning a spectrum of media, produced in an almost seraphic burst of creative energy that sees him engaged in his studio up to 18 hours a day. The work itself—a kaleidoscope of optical experiments, kinetic constructions, geometric meditations, and contemplations of color—has poured forth in a torrent, gathering accolades and charming collectors along the way.

The relative youth of his practice belies a maturity of theme and style in the work.

Steeped in the world of art, Ron's current work comprises several thematic families:

kinetic imagery, geometric abstractions, optical experiments, and visual iconography all take residence in his oeuvre. Rendered in formally precise, texturally refined surfaces, his wide-ranging works yet cohere as a unified body that questions the mechanics and metaphysics of the act of seeing itself.

Looking towards a major exhibition in 2015 Ron now works in confidence of an incipient artistic career that is, above all, a gift and a surprise. "I never once thought of myself as

RON AGAM BIOGRAPHY

an artist—as even someone capable of art,” Ron maintains. “So I began this work as a leap, without knowing where it will go.”

Despite his insistence that he is a newcomer in the world of art, one cannot deny Agam a pedigree. The son of the well-known kinetic artist Yaacov Agam, Ron’s work speaks in a familiar idiom—literally. Yet, in the three years since he took up a paintbrush for the first time and began to use it, Ron has forged a distinctive vocabulary, wherein color, form, and point-of-view cohere into a new dialect, asking altogether different questions.

Speaking in this dialect, interpreting this new-found creative freedom, Ron now works with a hard-won satisfaction that shows no signs of waning. His journey here may have been circuitous, but he now stands facing a clear future. “It is a fact that only artists can see the future,” he explains. “In that sense, I have a strong faith in art, as something that can alleviate mental misery. Children—and weren’t we all children?—see before they can talk. The visual transcends the verbal. Art can therefore be universal, and change one’s perspective. I am a proponent of that sort of disruption.”