

What the Fuck? Damien Poulain on his Ibiza residency

Interview by Bryony Stone

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Fresh from a residency in Ibiza, graphic designer and illustrator Damien Poulain tells us a bit more about his latest project Local People (What the Fuck).



What took you to the white isle?

"I had the privilege of taking part of the inaugural edition of the residency Ses Dotze Naus, translated as The Twelve Sailors in Ibicenco. Ses Dotze Naus is the first contemporary artists' residency to take place in Ibiza. Over two weeks, I was immersed in a finca [Spanish for 'estate'] alongside 11 other international artists from different backgrounds such as photography, videography, sculpture, curating, music and performance. The aim of this residency was to engage with the island, its culture and its artisans through the creation of an artwork.

Before my arrival I did some research about the traditional craftsmen and makers of the island. I discovered the tradition of the seamstress and spinners of the Island, that always have been present in the homes of the Island and who became more industrial from 1925 with the construction of fabrics of spinners. For this project I chose to collaborate with the local designer Sonia Delbes who produces her own clothing using traditional techniques and knowledges. "



And what's the story behind the project's attention-grabbing title?

“ Loca People (What the Fuck!) is a techno hit by Spanish DJ Sak Noel. This song is an hymn to the party, the hedonism, the freedom without responsibility. I attempted to create a dialogue between two opposite cultures and traditions of the island. One disappearing — such as textiles — and the other dictating the industry of Ibiza — the electronic music. Moreover I wanted to use the banners to play with its first relevance and utility, the strength of the sign and symbol. I wanted to create the banners of the kingdom of electronic music: Ibiza. Loca People (What the Fuck!) has been number 1 in more than 15 countries around the globe and has over 300 million views on Youtube. It's the unknown hymn of the Kingdom!

All the text [on the flags] are tracks titles chosen from the most famous techno tracks played in Ibiza clubs. I found a listing of the top 30 best Ibiza techno tracks of all time. I wanted to use track titles that are familiar to us all. The combination of the words such as Can You Feel It sound like something we have already heard on the radio or in a bar.

Ibiza has grown from being a traditional farming island to the most iconic techno party place in the world. I wanted to highlight this tension between past and present. By referencing the music played in the clubs of Ibiza, the banners examine the relationship between local production and globalisation.”



**How does music influence your work generally?**

“If I have to relate to music with my work it would be on the value of the rhythm and the tempo. There is always a rhythm in design: it’s what creates the harmony of the piece. I consider music as the most powerful art. There are no boundaries to access music and to understanding it: it’s about feelings more than other art. It belongs to everyone.”

Finally, what projects have you got coming up that we should know about?

“For year I have been exploring street art through the project Faces, a series of paintings on shutters throughout various cities in the world. This project is a study on the relation between the space and the form. I have been making this project in Spain, The Netherlands, France, Japan and I would love to get the opportunity to expend it to other territories. I’ve also completed a nice project with the director Johan Kramer, due to be out soon. It’s a poster for the tiniest hotel in the Netherlands.”



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Words **Bryony Stone**

Work **Graphic Design**

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Above Damien Poulain: *Local People (What the Fuck)*



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