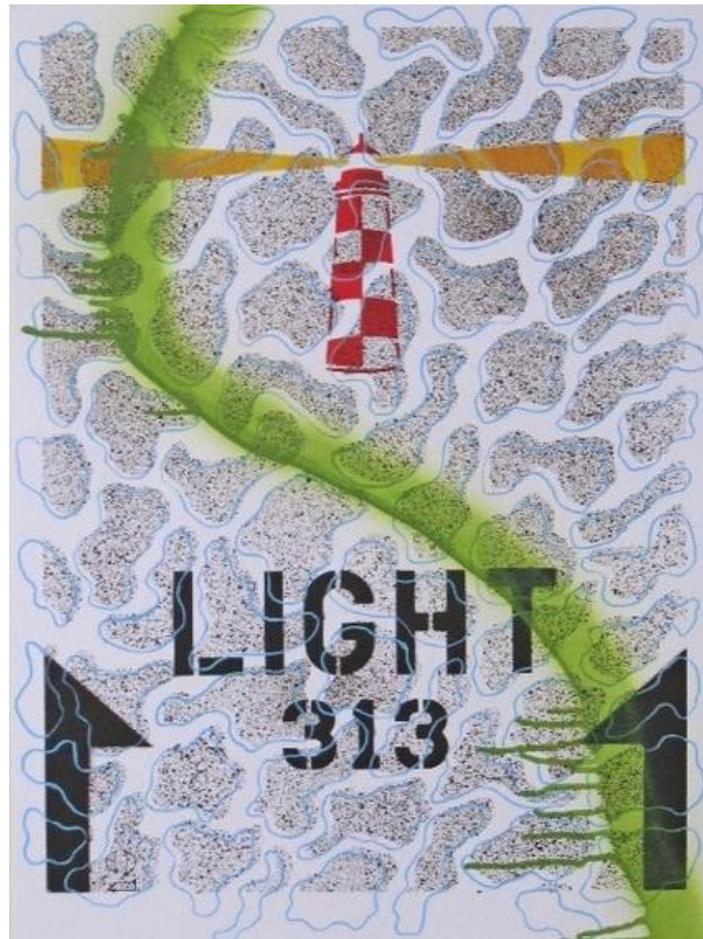


SONCE
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**Grace and Power, Fragility and
Strength: Artist Christophe Leroux
Discusses His 'New Works' at the
Sonce Alexander Gallery**



More than ever, our world exhibits complex interaction between the human and the mechanical, between organic subtlety and industrial intensity, between the transience of light (consider increasingly fleeting time) and the rigidity (or apparent permanence) of heavy metal. Our minds may be on digital devices, but our bodies are riding planes, trains, and automobiles; elevators, escalators, and matter-transference beams (well, almost).

Internationally-acclaimed artist Christophe Leroux displays an innate yet well-tempered sensibility concerning these contrasts - grace and power; fragility and strength -- bringing them forth in dramatic and provocative ways in his show "New Works" - which runs through Saturday, October 11, at the [Sonce Alexander Gallery](#), in Los Angeles.



Sonce Alexander and Christophe Leroux

From the official press release:

Leroux's harmonious compositions belie their use of modern materials and choice of mediums: metal wall sculptures and paintings on paper. His aesthetic is characterized by ordered layering where colors occupy prominent boundaries, occasionally blending through progressive mechanized copper, zinc and aluminum [PRINTING](#). Often made from materials that are manipulated to reflect color and light, his works are cited by scholarly texts (i.e. the work of Peter Frank) as imparting the belief that an artist is a reflection of society. Leroux's use of handmade stencils symbolizes his inclination to follow in the path of urbanity. The incorporation of language into his work, via geometrical considerations, not only comments on industrialization and urbanization, but globalization as well.



Indeed, his works do speak, as does the man. I recently sat down to tea with Monsieur Leroux, and was pleased to find the artist affable, remarkably focused on the intentions of his work -- and a science fiction fan! (Christophe's English is better than my French,

and Ms. Sonce Alexander joined us to bridge any linguistic couloirs.) Considering that his work abides in the collections of Nancy Jane Goldston, Blake Byrne, Joseph Smallhoover, Eugenio Lopez, and the Jumex Colección of Mexico City -- plus he's been invited to participate in museum shows at MOCA in Los Angeles and Musée Galliera in Paris -- Christophe has gone global, yet at our table frankly he's disarmingly easygoing and a lot of fun. As he's the son of a builder (turned art collector!) who taught his son well, I ask first how he defines his tradition.

"My work is all urban-industrial," M. Leroux says. "And all my influences come from living with trains, airplanes, ships, the big factories, big trucks -- everything very industrial, and essentially very urban. Heavy-duty industrial stuff." He [CONTINUES](#) regarding his creative path: "It's definitely an evolution. I started with concrete pieces. Concrete. And after: concrete and steel. And I moved to concrete and aluminum. And now it's more aluminum -- but all on the wall."



Christophe accentuates this factor: He's not recycling; the materials -- first sculptures, currently hanging pieces -- he sources fresh.

"I always work with a clean sheet of steel or aluminum. It's always perfect -- it's like a mirror. Because I really, really, really don't want to have metal pieces which impose on me a size. You see what I mean? I want to choose the size. So I go to the warehouse for metal, and I cut the pieces, the metal sheets, to the size I really want. That's very, very, very important for me."



The British call it *aluminium*, with a second 'i' -- but I simply ask about the aluminum.

"I choose aluminum, because I want to work with the light." Christophe [CONTINUES](#).
"You saw the show. When you have the aluminum pieces, when the light is on, you have some kind of reflection: so it goes from the silver, to basically the dark, dark greys. But when you take the light off - it changes everything. If you put kind of a medium light, it's another feeling. So it's really playing with the light. Because the main thing is: it has to be

beautiful. The aesthetic is really, really, really important! So it's very important, the numbers -- I choose the numbers because of the aesthetic of the numbers. It's not random; I don't just put a 3 and a 5 and a 2 -- I choose it because of the shape of the 3, the shape of the 5, the shape of the 2. So there is nothing random."



Opening Night: Rema Ghuloum, Marie Thibeault, Sonce Alexander, Ann Harezlak

Sonce adds a note: "You've often said that you choose the shapes," she reminds Christophe and enlightens me, "so, for example, if there's a very square-ish or geometrical shape, he likes to contrast it with something round: like a 3 or 6 or 9. You seem to constantly contrast."

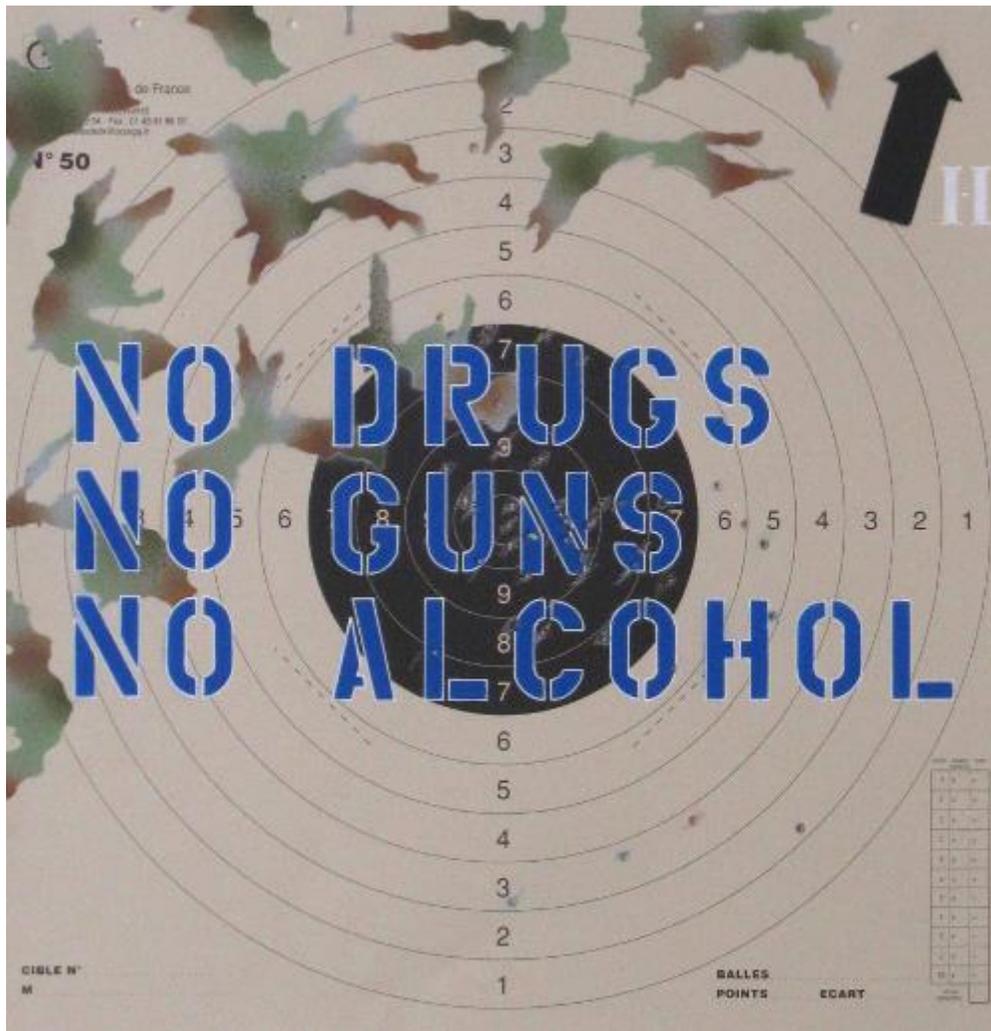
Indeed, much thought goes into this, and Christophe further explains how the shape of a letter or number closes off a direction, while opening another. So I ask him about the words (he prefers short, incisive ones).

"I do English and French," he laughs. "The shape dictates. It has to be beautiful." (And short.) "That's why I did 'UP,' for example. It's small with the arrow, and you can see all the metal around it. I wanted to do this piece, because I wanted the meaning of 'UP,' but also the light all around it."



For a different quality, Sonce prompts Christophe to discuss his piece, 'UNLOADED.'

"'UNLOADED' is divided by two, so you have the upper part: it's all painting; and the bottom part, it's all metal. But I wanted something at the end, to close the piece. So I deeply wanted, for this particular piece, a long word which would take the whole width of the piece. I did it in white because I didn't want it to be 'in your face.' (Sonce adds that the piece is 7' tall by 3 ½' wide - big! - and many dimensions are considered.)



We turn to the paint-on-paper works, personally fired at by Christophe's brother, Rodolphe Leroux -- who apparently boasts somewhat superior marksmanship (his bullet holes are closer to the middle). Sonce asks if the pieces, while not necessarily pro-gun, are anti-gun, and Christophe helpfully replies.

"No no no no! It's just that when you have a gun, you have to be so careful! If you have a handgun in your bedroom, you put the bullets in the kitchen! You don't keep a loaded gun at your place, because that's dangerous." Sonce then leads us to consider one of the "target" pieces, called "SAFETY STARTS HERE."

"That's the perfect example!" declares Christophe in an accent you'd like. "It's got holes everywhere, and it says, 'SAFETY STARTS HERE.' So it's about being very careful: with guns or rifles or machine guns, or whatever." Sonce posits that he means more than the safety catch -- but mental and moral safety -- and he concurs.



So it's not just big works with this artist -- it's big ideas! Sir Richard Branson and associates, kindly note that Monsieur Leroux would love to be commissioned to paint the tail fins of planes - or whole planes! (Boeing 747-8 and Airbus A380, Christophe's your man.) He's also up to paint the very symbol of industry: the train. "It would be sooo much fun," the artist coos. (Plus he's got some secret projects to reveal in the next couple of years.)



Truly, Christophe exults in his work. "When I touch a piece of metal, it talks to me. I'm like, 'Wow!'" He further reveals: "Because, the thing is, really, this is a very industrial world: we manufacture cars and planes and fast trains and really heavy stuff. So my art is a reflection of our world."

Photos and images courtesy of Christophe Leroux and the Sonce Alexander Gallery

Note: Immediately after the closing of this show (at 2673 South La Cienega Boulevard), the Sonce Alexander Gallery opens in a new location: 2634 South La Cienega Boulevard, Los Angeles, CA, 90034

[Sonce Alexander Gallery](#)