

# Interview with Mr. Jean-Baptiste Sibertin-Blanc artist DIRECTOR, DAUM-FRANCE



Jean-Baptiste Sibertin-Blanc  
Designer Born 1957

1979 CAP in carpentry, Ecole Boulle

1987 Graduates from Ensci / Les Ateliers

1987-1991 Designer at Taller de Arquitectura, Ricardo Bofill, Paris

Since 1991 - Studio JBSB: Creations for Hermès, Ligne Roset, Pufforcat, Christoffle, Lampe Berger, Salviati, Musée des Arts Décoratifs, Valli e Valli, glass tiling for Saint-Gobain Glass, Tarkett Sommer... Training and teaching missions: Indian Ocean, ESAD in Reims, Certav (European Centre for Research and Training in Glass-making - Vannes le Châtel), Strate College, ENSCL.

Since 1999 - Artistic Director, Daum France; working on Daum's identity and its place in the 21st century. Repositioning the Art and Design worlds; collection 12+1 created by twelve (+1) talented designers. Research projects integrating digital design in the new product development process.

**Edge Kitchens & Bathrooms (K&B):** Your work is known to be full of poetry and passion, please describe how is poetry translated through your work and tell us about a design that is so dear to you?

**Jean-Baptiste Sibertin-Blanc**

**(JB):** Thank you. I think every artist or designer has his own world full of dreams, and this one is built thanks his personal culture, sensibility, education. About my design, it's coming from 2 opposite educations; one from my job as a cabinet maker for 5 years after 4 years in the best craft's school in Paris, and later, 5 years in an high school of industrial design in Paris too. So my personal design is based on a very strong respect for the past know how and a reflection about the future; the real needs in a world in which one we have so many useless objects... So I hope, my poetry is coming from my love about nature, about architecture and sculpture, about Japanese culture. I think as the poet said "objects have soul" and our job is to design this meaning. In this sense, I consider my design

as a sculptural work on useful products.

**(K&B):** They say an artist should be in a specific mood to be able to create art, how is this applicable to you? Do you create when you are sad? Happy? In love?

**(JB):** I think the specific mood for me is to be cool, with the minimum of stress, with space, light and nature, I mean to be more receptive about my ideas, my intuitions, to be able to assembly a lot of different influences at the same moment. To design a new project, it's like to resolve an equation with a lot of different unknown parts. We never know when we'll have a good, a very good or an excellent idea. So I have no preference about a specific mood. I have to let my imagination to work with my unconsciousness memory.

**(K&B):** Please tell us about the major phases that a design goes through till it is ready?

**(JB):** The major phases are quite still the same for any project.

First is the idea, the concept, when you think, when you keep something new and interesting. 95% of the project is done. Second, you have to define the proportions, the right scale, the connections between the different materials and the different volumes without forgetting the technical aspects. Third, you have to build the 3D model, the volume where you can approach each detail, the thickness, the harmony of the forms, the textures of the surfaces. Fourth, you have to control the realization, the colours and the finish to be sure to obtain the good result. This is your responsibility if the project is not at the level you expect at the beginning.

**(K&B):** Tell us more about the latest collection, and what was the source of inspiration?

**(JB):** The latest collection is Hippic by Daum launched in January 2009, just after Afric'art in September 2008. The horse is the major animal from the Daum bestiary and this segment represents 15% of the C.A. from Daum's collections. But we have never dedicated a full

collection to it. So the name code during the time we worked on it, was "the Horses from the world"; different races, different cultures, different designs from very realist to very imaginary one, very artistic to very typical. With 12 new pieces and some horses from the last 2 years collections, we have created a complete offer for very different collectors with very different sensibilities. I played with the colours and different scale too.

**(K&B):** Who are the collectors of DAUM art pieces?

**(JB):** The collectors of Daum art pieces are in love with the "art decorative" in general, and with the very unique process from the brand in particular. He likes the trans lucidity of the paste of crystal and the mineral aspect from the model. They appreciate a lot the manufacturing from every product as a unique one. They are from the Middle East, USA, Asia and Europe, but they have in common a world culture on art and specially a very nice knowledge about Daum's history.



**(K&B):** When you're creating a design, what makes you certain that it will find international acceptance? What are the basics that an artist should implement in his work to make his work globally acceptable and impressive?

**(JB):** Difficult question, but we know the international taste. We know it about fashion, art and architecture, cars and sportswear. They can appear as very different subjects, but in fact I mean we are in a global world the culture is becoming the same ... unfortunately may be. We listen and we know the tendencies. What is interesting and more difficult about Daum, this is the artistic development and on this way, the intuition is very important. When I work on the themes for example the Love collection, we are confident that every country or collector is able to recognize himself in one piece or the other. I think in a very artistic brand like Daum, there are no basics because we have also to surprise the collector, and some time to shock him.

**(K&B):** Do think art design comes innate by nature or can you acquire it through studying?

**(JB):** I think we need both unless you are a genius. Innate by nature I feel more about familial environment. To study is definitely necessary even if you have to forget everything just after you graduate. The hardest result is to build your own artistic space, your convictions, your personal analysis about the world in which one you want to work; how your design or your art is an answer to speed up, a new approach. For myself my



grandfather was a painter and my father was an architect but it took to me a long time to feel I was to be a designer.

**(K&B):** Can you tell us what the current trends are for Table art?

**(JB):** The current trends for table art have moved a lot over the last ten years. I would like to compare another artistic universe, fashion like "haute couture" and "prêt a porter". I think table art was very classical with the styles, with the brand's names. The public was very conservative too. But little by little, for example the Italian design from Alessi has introduced news codes as colors, humour, news functionality. Also the prices thanks to the design and the mass production like with the Swedish brand, IKEA, has introduced new relation with table art. So we can buy "haute couture" and "prêt a porter" for the same table, to offer to you guest a very chic, but colourful and functional table.

**(K&B):** Do you design based on request for Royalties when asked?

**(JB):** Yes

**(K&B):** What tips would you give table art collectors when buying any luxury item?

**(JB):** The regular tip is to help the collector to think about the best installation in his house, to be also an interior designer for him, to have an opinion about his collection. At the end you can also deliver the new piece at home.

**(K&B):** What are your favourite colours when designing?



**(JB):** I have no favourite colour, because my design is an approach with very different material. Each one has its own colour. Also I consider that every design has to meet the right colour, as every colour for each space in a house or for a dress code. In another way if I consider a new design, a new object as a small architecture (small scale) I can have a reflection about the environment. The place and the functionality can be a guide to choose the right colour. Also especially when I have to choose the colours for the sculptures, I try to feel different opinion before to decide: not too dark, very light colours, amber; mixed blue...it depends about the spirit from every one.

**(K&B):** If you were to create a new piece of art inspired by a country, what country would that be?

**(JB):** It could be Japan where I went for the first time 25 years ago; the harmony of forms, the details, the material as bamboo or ceramics, the relation with the nature, with the light and the shadow... but also the energy from the modernity. Less is more. Or Africa. In 1998, I have made an exhibition about my works specially dedicated to the different places and countries where I worked. The name was: "the place's culture". Every project I have done in different countries carries something from the local culture. I try to feel about specificity from the place, to translate, to transpose this in my creation. Sometime it's totally abstract but ... I am sure than the objects, everywhere in the world, are the signs from the cultures where they were thought.

