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**KIDROBOT**  
eBoy



# *Fusion 5 Festival*

## *The beautiful collision of art and music on the French Riviera*

**I**T'S 12:24 AM, AND I'M ON THE TOP FLOOR OF the 3.14 Hotel in Cannes, France, in the waning hours of the Fusion 5 Festival. I'm in the suite of French street artist MKAN and German-via-Brooklyn artist/photographer Till Krautkrämer, and we're drinking a delicious concoction of Absolut vodka with escargot chanticleer juice in an effort to stave off the dull thud in our collective minds. That's escargot, as in snails. Till's putting out a brand of Vitamin Water-mocking beverages called Meat Water, with flavors ranging from Hungarian Goulash to Peking Duck to Beef Stroganoff. It's late, and just started raining in the Sunday evening outside, the precipitation falling steadily on the gilded facade of the Carlton Hotel across the rue and the decks of the \$100,000,000 yachts anchored in the bay outside our balcony. I've slept exactly 9 hours in the last 54, and I have to be awake at 3:45 am to catch a shuttle to Nice. Needless to say, pulling an all-nighter is the only rational move. If I go to sleep now, there's no way I'm making my plane unless some giant concierge throws me over his shoulder and fireman-carries my sleeping body to the Nice airport.

Thinking back, when initially invited to this Fusion 5 Festival, I really had no idea what to expect. What I got were two jet-fueled nights of parties in the French Mediterranean, in the most progressive hotel in Cannes, surrounded by avant-garde revelers culled from throughout the globe. Painters, photographers, digital artists, journalists, writers, editors, producers, DJs, graff artists and general libertine patrons of the arts. It was a blur, highlighted by a blistering

Friday night set from A.R.E. Weapons (including a drunken writer getting up onstage and demanding they play "Weird Wild Free"...which they did, and killed), copious liquor, a Spanish DJ who looked like Picasso's octogenarian horse trainer, and a closing night show by the Cobrakillers, punctuated by them pouring bottles of cabernet over their heads (is it odd to find burgundy wine streaming down beautiful, high-cheeked, diamond-chiseled German visages strangely titillating?). All the while surrounded by works from a handpicked group of emerging artists, resulting in pure artistic revelry of the highest order.







COBRA KILLER







*"It was a tricky job to match up the art and artists with the music..."*



IRIS BITTER



IRIS BITTER



It's no secret Cannes has become about as cutting edge and hip as an aging Hamptons Country Club—a predictable escape for Old European Money gentiles, nouveau riche vacationing Russian mobsters and the saline-collagen-Botox-enhanced tits-on-a-stick that gravitate to them. This festival was visualized by the Hotel 3.14's Event Director Dani Morla as a bulwark to fight that trend—a way to re-shape Cannes in an artistic mold. When Dani met Yasha Young, owner and curator of the Strychnin Galleries—three avant-garde spaces in the art capitals of Berlin, London and Tokyo—the duo struck gold. They came up with the idea of fusing art and music by hosting emerging art talent in the hotel's suites, and pairing them with DJs born the globe over. A year-and-a-half of planning later, and the rest is history.

#### How did you first come about to visualize the Fusion5 Festival?

**Dani Morla:** Actually I've always been passionate about music and art in general. I think that playing or performing music is an art as well, so why not put the two together and make a fusion between them? The idea about exhibiting in the rooms came as I was trying to find a new and unique event for the 3.14 Hotel, then I first met Yasha...

#### How did you see Strychnin's role in this event?

**Yasha Young:** We brought in the artists and their amazing work, and the 3.14 provided the breathtaking environment for people to feel both elevated and relaxed in at the same time. None would have worked without the other...

#### How much did you imagine the art to balance with the music?

**Dani:** I think art and music are absolutely complimentary, if you know how to choose the right music for the artist's

universe. The challenge is to create a harmonic atmosphere which matches perfectly between the artwork and the music, and every time you get it through you feel the difference.

**Yasha:** It was a tricky job to match up the art and artists with the music. We were very careful in our selection of DJs, and it took a pretty long time to figure out which artwork would go with which music—and also who of our artists would enjoy which kind of music in their room. In the end, I think it worked out well and everyone was very happy. There are some artists who are actually still in touch with "their" DJ, and that was part of what Fusion 5 was all about: bringing people together, making new friends, sharing an experience.

#### In the end, what was your favorite artist or installation at the Fusion5?

**Yasha:** I think what was among the greatest moments was Friday night—the party in the lobby of the Hotel—because that is when it all came together for

the first time. There was a sense of having arrived in a place: everyone was comfortable and enjoyed themselves, there was art and music and the environment of the 3.14, and there was this great feeling of anticipation. The opening of the rooms was yet to come, there was something yet to be excited about—so I would say my favorite installation was the opening event!

#### Will there be another Fusion 5 next year?

**Dani:** Of course! We have invited 15 different galleries, an image so much more extended than this first one—more photos and video artwork, less digital work.

**Yasha:** We will always try to improve it—the Festival is about experimenting and growth, and we do not exclude ourselves from this maxim... But most of all I think we will order tons of sunshine way in advance for next year—they ran out too early this time around!