

# GEMFIELDS

Gemfields partners with Whitewall to present 'GEOCHROM' by Sebastien Leon at Design Miami/



Link to download images: <https://we.tl/t-aGurtwg6xF>

Photo Credit: Ryan Kobane/BFA.com

Miami, 3 December 2019

On 3 December 2019, Gemfields in partnership with Whitewall presented 'GEOCHROM' by Sebastien Leon at Design Miami/ (Convention Center Drive between 18th and 19th Streets, Miami Beach, USA). The result is an artistic experience that brings to life the inimitable beauty of responsibly sourced gems, celebrating the unique story within every gemstone.

Sebastien Leon is a French Los Angeles-based artist and designer. Through his multi-disciplinary work, Sebastien brings to life ethereal physical environments that are at once tangible and familiar, and yet unmistakably abstract.

The exhibition plays on how we see colour, for it is impossible for our eyes to simultaneously detect pure green and pure red: it is one or the other. The installation graduates from red to green, creating the ultimate contrast. Sebastien called his installation Geochrom, a hybrid of "geo" (the earth) and "chrom" (colours). It explores the geological structure of emeralds and rubies in both 2D and 3D forms, with two geometric paintings, large glass installations coloured by LED tubes and a sound sculpture.

Gemfields' director of marketing and communications, Emily Dungey, comments: "Gemfields is partnering with the fashion and art worlds, opening up new audiences to consider coloured gemstones and the stories

involved in their discovery at Gemfields' mines in Africa. Sebastien Leon's study into the depths of gemstone colour provides a fascinating take on these marvels of nature."

Rubies and sapphires share the same characteristics, crystal structure and chemical composition. They only differ in the trace element, chromium, from which rubies get their colour. The word ruby comes from *ruber*, Latin for red.

Rubies vary in colour more than one might realise, from purplish-red to orangey-red. Traditionally, the most prized colours for rubies are a slightly bluish red body colour and the purer red fluorescent emission. A ruby's primary hue must be red – the more vivid, the better.

Rubies from different origins tend to each have their own distinctive hue, but those found in Mozambique cover all the known colour ranges, including the rarest pure fluorescent reds. As a result, Mozambique has become the world's most significant location for sourcing rubies.

Emeralds belong to the mineral family known as beryl: several different varieties of the mineral exist, including aquamarine, morganite and heliodor, but the green emerald is the most prized and valuable.

An emerald's colour – varying from bluish green to pure green with vivid colour saturation – is determined by the levels of chromium, vanadium and iron present in the gemstone. As a result of the specific amounts of these elements available when the crystals formed, emeralds from different countries, and even from different mines in the same countries, can display recognisably different shades of green, although there is, of course, some overlap. East African emeralds are geologically much older than emeralds from other origins, and as a result, they differ in their formation, composition and key features.

Zambian emeralds get their beautiful intense green colour from the presence of chromium, iron and beryllium, and they are often lacking in vanadium, resulting in a bluish-green, lively and often eye-clean emerald.

Sebastien Leon is a French Los Angeles-based artist and designer active in the fields of painting, installation, video, sculpture and music. He is inspired by the logic of the cosmos: the formation of the earth, the nature of time and space, the physical manifestation of sound and, of course, the place of life in all of this. His works are often informed by the shapes of crystal formations, whether mirroring their shapes into sculptures, or projecting their structure onto paintings.

Fascinated by crystal formations, because of their beauty, their mathematical logic, and because of the way light illuminates their core, Sebastien was drawn to Gemfields as he was looking into emeralds. He was mostly

familiar with emeralds from Brazil, but learned that some of the oldest gemstones come from Africa. In fact, Gemfields' Zambian emeralds date back as far as 500 million years. Sebastien states: "Emeralds and rubies are considered the finest gemstones, so it is an honour to be working with Gemfields."

Sebastien describes his installation: "I designed three glass pieces for the installation: two large pendants transpierced by coloured LED tubes, and a tabletop sound sculpture using a transducer speaker. Transducers transmit sonic vibrations to a surface through a coil, basically using matter to propagate sound. I created the music with composer Romain Strugala, using bold elemental sounds. As for colours, one pendant is green with red light, another one is red with green light, and the sound sculpture is treated with a dichroic green-to-red finish. All the pieces are inspired by the geometry of crystal formations, of course.

As well as supplying the majority of the world's rough rubies and emeralds, Gemfields initiates activations to build desire for coloured gemstones. Gemfields has collaborated with many partners and international jewellery brands, including Fabergé, an iconic name with an exceptional heritage and a member of the Gemfields Group. Often surprising, unexpected and unique, these collaborations are chosen to promote consumer awareness and increase the appeal of coloured gemstones, raising their profile, and in turn providing greater benefit to their place of origin: Africa.

Artistic collaborations to date include VOID by Dan Tobin Smith and The Experience Machine, exhibited at the London Design Festival in September 2019. VOID took the form of an immersive experience combining large-scale projections of gemstones, accompanied by female electronic drone choir NYX. More recently, Gemfields brought larger-than-life ruby and emerald sculptures to Art021, Shanghai's Contemporary Art Fair, complete with new video footage showing gemstone discovery at mine sites in Zambia and Mozambique.

*Whitewall* is a cultural brand and platform that brings its audience beyond the walls of creative industries in order to reveal talents and people that are changing the fields of art, design, fashion and lifestyle.

"We are thrilled to connect Gemfields with the works of art and design presented at Design Miami/ this December. Working in collaboration with the artist Sebastien Leon, an installation has been created that resonates with the values that Gemfields, Design Miami/ and *Whitewall* share: sustainability and transparency on a local and global level."

*Whitewall* champions the creative visionaries of our future, with an eye towards social responsibility, sustainable impact and equal representation.

'Geochrom' will run the duration of Design Miami/ from 3 December to 8 December, 2019.

-Ends-

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### Notes to editors

## ABOUT GEMFIELDS

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Gemfields is a world-leading supplier of responsibly sourced, coloured gemstones. Gemfields is the operator and 75% owner of both the Kagem emerald mine in Zambia (believed to be the world's single largest producing emerald mine) and the Montepuez ruby mine in Mozambique (one of the most significant recently discovered

ruby deposits in the world). Gemfields believes that those who mine gemstones should do so with transparency, legitimacy and integrity.

Gemfields introduced the most technologically advanced coloured gemstone sort house in the world at its operations in Mozambique, with state-of-the-art equipment, like optical sorting machines. In addition, a proprietary grading system, pioneering auction platform and an active marketing presence means Gemfields plays a significant role in the rise of African gemstones. This endeavour is coupled with a strong belief that coloured gemstones should create a positive impact for the country and community from which they originate.

Responsible sourcing for Gemfields means implementing industry-leading policies and practices across operations, transparency in our auction sales process, an active role in working groups to modernise the sector, projects to improve health, education and livelihoods for the communities around our mines and conservation efforts (#conservationgemstones) to protect Africa's great wildlife and biodiversity.

Fabergé - an iconic name with an exceptional heritage - is a member of the Gemfields Group. This enables Gemfields to improve its positioning, perception and consumer awareness of responsibly sourced coloured gemstones through the beauty of design and craftsmanship.

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Gemfields: [Gemfields.com](https://www.gemfields.com) | [Investors](#) | [Instagram](#) | [Facebook](#) | [Twitter](#) | [YouTube](#)

Fabergé: [Fabergé.com](https://www.faberge.com) | [Instagram](#) | [Facebook](#) | [Twitter](#) | [YouTube](#)

Kagem Mining: [LinkedIn](#)

Montepuez Ruby Mining: [LinkedIn](#)

## **ABOUT SEBASTIEN LEON**

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Sebastien Leon Agneessens is a French Los Angeles-based artist and designer active in the fields of painting, installation, video, sculpture and music.

With a complex language composed of layered geometric abstraction, his paintings map imagined landscapes that seem to stretch far beyond their borders, imbuing them with a palpable sense of spatial infinity evocative of the wonders of the cosmological world. Layering strong lines and dots to achieve an expansive three-dimensional territory, Leon's pictures are deeply textured and detailed, pulling the viewer into a mesmerising optical rhythm.

His slick multi-channel musical sculptures generate cinematic soundtracks, composed of field recordings mixed with instrumental loops, and sequenced in algorithmic formulas. Not unlike his pictorial work, Leon's experiential soundscapes loop to eternity, triggering in its listeners a hypnotic sense of place, and seeking to echo the sacred connection between man and the Earth.

His furniture, typically relying on tubular metallic structures, is strongly influenced by his immediate environment. His decade in New York translates into a collection inspired by the world of construction sites, and his move to California morphs into designs drawn from insects and rock formations.

Through his multi-disciplinary work, Sebastien brings to life ethereal physical environments that are at once tangible and familiar, and yet unmistakably abstract.

Sebastien is the founder of acclaimed experiential studio Formavision, and the co-founder of award-winning furniture company Atelier d'Amis.

To discover more about Sebastien Leon visit: [www.sebleon.com](http://www.sebleon.com)