

SALON SPOTLIGHT: SAAM GABBAY

The creative polymath and Venice Beach member on creating moments that expand perspectives and spark connection.

by *NeueJournal* photography by *Caity Krone* Venice Beach **Conversations, Members**



SALON SPOTLIGHT

Salon Spotlight LA: Saam Gabbay

Since first opening its doors ten years ago in New York City, NeueHouse has been a meeting place for creators, thinkers, and innovators. As we celebrate ten years, meet some of the members shaping our community and keeping us inspired from coast to coast.

Saam Gabbay is an Iranian-American photographer and director whose lens has captured awe-inspiring glaciers in Antarctica and towering sand dunes of Death Valley, both for commercial shoots and personal projects. But that’s not all he does. The director-photographer is also a self-taught composer and creative polymath who, in his spare time ventures into the worlds of immersive experiences and music. Whether it’s through his superhero workshops that invite participants to explore their identities or his immersive, genre-defying concerts, Saam lives to create moments that challenge perception and spark connection. Meet the NeueHouse Venice Beach Member as he answers our House Q&A:

Name: Saam Gabbay

Briefly describe what you do:

I’m an artist and composer and work in advertising as a photographer and director. I mentor through my workshops that help people find their superpowers. I like to create things that delight and feel like journeys.

Path not taken:

I am not trained in anything that I’m currently doing. (Secret: I don’t know the names of chords nor the names of lighting equipment).

What’s a metaphor to describe your creative process?

Creativity feels like my soul wants to experience all sorts of things. Which means it’s often times dragging my terrified body around to do things I don’t think I should be doing! My job is to use a leaf blower to clear the field so I can hear the whisper of the universe. Then pray that I can man up and answer the call.

What person or piece of creative work has had an impact on your own?

There are countless monsters of creativity who have shaped me, from Patrick Moraz to Steve Reich to Catholic scholars. But in the last year, it has been my aunt Madeleine who has only days left on Earth. I have been recording her speaking at bedside and making music with her graceful voice and wisdom. People seem to become even more clairvoyant when they near the threshold of death. I noticed that the best version of me shows up when I’m with her because she brings out the light in people. She has set an example of how life can be lived if I focus more deeply on seeing people through their gifts.

I tend to get my best ideas and breakthroughs by:

Taking a shower or ocean swim. Water is where all my ideas come. I used to have a scuba diving notebook and pen in the shower, now I just slide the door open and yell my ideas at Siri to jot down!!



Current read or listen:

I read about a book a week, you can see some of my book reviews at www.saamgabbay.com/books (subject to change with my upcoming site). I listen to a vast array of music across all genres. This week I’ve been binging on Salami Rose Joe Louis and a lot of drum ’n’ bass.

Something new you’ve discovered in the past year that now you can’t live without:

To be honest, I can’t stop thinking about Antarctica. I was moved to tears in that landscape.

Best part of what I do:

I get to reframe reality and delight people. I mean, that is pure bliss!

Hardest part of what I do:

For me, creativity is life, so I have to be careful not to turn everything into a project. I love recording and creating so much that it can be hard to sit still. And I still struggle terribly with the periods between big projects. It can still get dark for the soul when I’m waiting for the call.

What are you excited about right now?

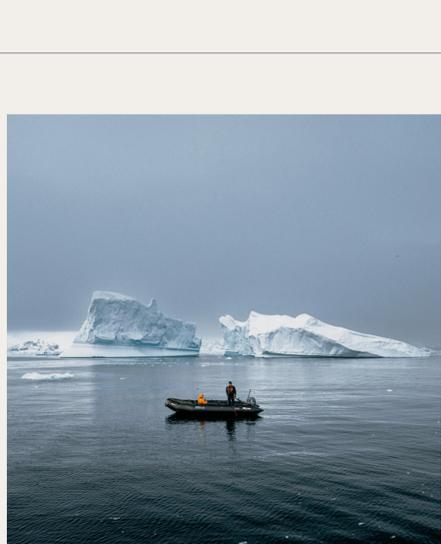
A couple of commercials shoots, one for BMW, and one in Argentina. Working on a mesmerizing surround sound orchestral composition to premiere at the next R37 concert. Planning a return to Antarctica. And always working on improving my inner landscape.

Life hack:

Action is awareness. As soon as I take a step or hit the first note on the keyboard, the next step is revealed. Meaning, I have no intellectual idea WTF I’m doing and all the thinking and planning will get me nowhere. Instead of the misery of treading water and waiting forever, I have to take action in the form of a simple step. Through immediate feedback, life becomes about discovery and flow. If any day I forget this, the treading begins and I have to be reminded again. God shows up when I take a step towards it.

Follow Saam:

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L: Antarctica. R: Arctic. Courtesy of Saam Gabbay

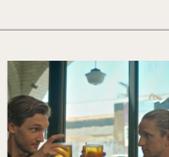


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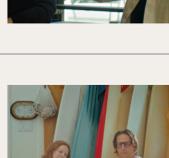
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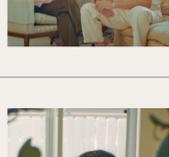
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