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NEWS WITH A TWIST

WGNO abc

80° F

The banner features a dark purple background with colorful abstract shapes in green, orange, and yellow. The text 'NEWS WITH A TWIST' is written in a large, white, stylized font with black outlines. Below the main title, 'WGNO abc' is displayed in a smaller font. To the right, a realistic image of the moon is shown, and the temperature '80° F' is displayed in white.

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Anne Outler

5:06 p.m. CDT, October 27, 2011

NEW ORLEANS— German-born production designer Stefan Beese is a trained architect, but these days his creations don't exactly stand the test of time. "Here we have the possibility to produce something in a very short time frame, but also it is just up for 3 days. But in 3 days over 50, 60, 80 thousand people will experience it and that is just a different medium you're working in."

It's called environment design. You're creating not just a building or a space, but rather, an experience. "Being able to take people out of their usual day, time routine and being able to take them out to the Voodoo festival and just experience something completely different."

Days before the Voodoo Music Experience begins, the environment starts to take shape. Nestled between the live oaks at City Park are a variety of art installations from around the world. "It's always nice to have this blend: international, national and local artists. And them collaborating like with the heron or the mural artists, there's one from Australia involved so I mean, having this blend of collaboration is great."

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Many of these art installations serve dual purpose. They're both visual and functional. For example, the LOA containers next to the main stage also serve as the VIP area. Many of the pieces are interactive as well. A metal sculpture called Heron features flames and performers known as the Mystic Ponies. Meantime, visitors can actually climb inside its counterpart, Fledgling. "You can go in the ribcage of that bird, which is welded from old bike and car parts and there's a mechanism and you can go in there and with your feet, you can pedal these 15 foot steels wings and the tail of the wing."

Expect some of the festival's iconic pieces like Passage, the Pinwheel Garden and Cone along with new additions such as the Fountain de Lis and Tree of words. This year, Voodoo will even host carnival rides for both children and adults. Imagine taking in the festival from high atop a ferris wheel!