



The Spectrum of You
(El Espectro de Ti), 2022
Oil pastel, marker, ink,
acrylic, varnish, and resin
34 × 26 1/2 × 1/10 in
86.4 × 67.3 × 0.3 cm

CELEBRATING NARRATIVES AND INTIMATE CONNECTIONS THROUGH ART

BY MICHEAL SWANK

ARTIST JOAN COX @JOANCOXARTIST

Joan Cox is a visionary Queer painter based in Baltimore, Maryland. Although her work fits into the context of identity politics, with equal parts feminist agenda and lesbian narrative, truthfully, they're all about human intimacy. Cox's lush narrative paintings present the viewer with richly symbolic images of intimate relationships between two women, acknowledging and emphasizing the female gaze.

Joan embarked on her artistic journey with a bachelor's degree in painting in 1991, a pivotal moment in her life marked by personal and societal shifts. Her experiences resonate with her generation, encompassing the complexities of coming out during her college years, navigating the landscape of the AIDS pandemic, and ultimately finding her long-time partner. As an artist with a strong focus on figurative work and queer narratives, her journey has been a gradual and deeply transformative evolution.

Joan draws on her life with her partner of twenty years as well as the intimate lives of lesbian couples in her community. She focuses on stories championing their undeniably intense, complex, celebratory, and still taboo relationships. Her paintings encourage viewers to recognize and celebrate the authenticity of intimate relationships between two women, highlighting and affirming the true tenets of love.



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These painterly, narrative portraits invite viewers into the intimate domestic spaces as if a close friend has opened the door to their home and gained a glimpse of moments unfolding but without ever feeling voyeuristic. Through her art, she brings to life the paintings and images she longed to encounter during her formative years. These portrayals reflect her own experiences and affirm that she not only has a valid place within her community but is an integral part of a broader human tapestry.

Joan's art splendidly reflects the contemporary cultural landscape, embracing the diversity and inclusivity of our times. It emphasizes the universal emotions and connections that unite despite the efforts of others drawing contrasts. In a media culture that often oversimplifies female sexuality and relationships, her large-scale paintings vividly capture the truth and challenge preconceived notions about same-sex love. In this way, her work sparks meaningful conversations about the depth and validity of these connections. They serve as a poignant reminder that love in all its forms is beautifully diverse.

Joan's creative soul is intricately connected to the cities she calls home, and the qualities of each place beautifully manifest in her paintings. Baltimore, Maryland, with its dynamic creative energy, serves as a profound source of inspiration for Joan. She's not only influenced by her vibrant surroundings but actively contributes to the city's artistic spirit. Her art serves as a reflection of the diverse and ever-evolving cultural landscape of Baltimore, adding her unique voice to the chorus of creativity in the city.

Additionally, her passion for the vivacious spirit of New Orleans,

particularly the exuberant Mardi Gras celebrations, shines brilliantly in the paintings. These events embody a unique form of grassroots creativity, driven by the community itself rather than corporate sponsors. Lasting for weeks and resembling a captivating fusion of Halloween and Christmas, they capture the very essence of a community united by their shared dedication to creativity.

In addition to her artistic endeavors, Cox is committed to mentoring emerging artists, particularly those within the queer community. She encourages them to follow their instincts and share their work with the world, using the power of social media and online platforms. Her mentorship is a testament to her dedication to fostering the next generation of creative voices.

Joan Cox's art is not just about creating art; it's about catalyzing change. Her paintings and visual narratives disrupt societal norms, celebrate the enduring power of love, and provide a fresh perspective on the depth of human connection. They stand as a testament to the strength of same-sex relationships and the rich tapestry of the human experience. Joan Cox is more than an artist; she is a storyteller, a pioneer, and a champion for love in all its beautiful forms.

We invite you to delve even deeper into the world of Joan's paintings. Tune in to our enlightening interview with the podcast, 'The Bureau of Queer Art,' where she shares stories behind her work. Visit Artsy, the collector's platform, to witness the beauty of her creations and perhaps even add a piece to your collection. If you're in Ciudad de Mexico, join us at the Art Gallery Studios, where her work comes to life during the length of the exhibition.

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