

off the wall gallery

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JOSE BORRELL

JOSE BORRELL honed his artistic skills while growing up in Alcoy, Alicante, Spain, an area that has been long applauded for its artistic feats. There he studied the Sorolla-esque effects of light, the realism of everyday objects, and the intricacies of portraiture. While studying, he found that his true passion lay in painting portraits in capturing the mysterious essence of each of his subjects.

In order to first materialize the beauty of his subjects, Borrell mastered the foundation of drawing, enabling him to add detail refinement with every brushstroke. The drawing becomes the base from which he builds his illustrious works. Through the use of gradual light and color, Borrell evokes a softness in each work that accommodates his realist style. Balanced compositions are also important to giving the figure a realm of tranquility and contemplation; the more minimalist the space, the more room to explore their internal world.

By infusing his works with elements of portraiture, the surreal, and the classical, Jose Borrell redefines conventional figurative painting. Borrell says, "The majority of my works are feminine nudes through which I would like to transmit the calm, love, and passion that fills each of my model's lives." Each painting is a multidimensional scene that contemplates the role of the nude.

Deft manipulation of light and shadow highlights the inherent beauty of the human form. The sensuous, soft lines of his figures are paired with chimerical and surreal surroundings, causing a blurred division between reality and fantasy. The viewer is transported to a dreamlike setting where art and life merge. In this liminal space, the boundaries between the subject and viewer dissolve. The effect, in turn, is the realization that the body is not only a measure of physical human beauty, reiterated by the aesthetic values of the painting but a vessel useful for expressing greater human emotions and ideas that transcend form.

While having attended renowned art schools in Spain, including the Fine Arts School of Alcoy and at the Superior School of Saint Carlos of Valencia, Borrell is mainly a self-taught artist. He notes his mentorship under artist Paco Egea as key to the development of his skills in drawing and painting. Borrell designates Spanish artists Joaquín Sorolla and Salvador Dalí as his greatest inspirations; the influence of these artists is evident in his works, given his particular attention to light and fantasy.

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BIOGRAPHY

Born Josep Borell in Alcoy (Alicante) on January 25th, 1969, into a family without a traditional artistic background, Borrel always had the support of his parents and older sister. From a young age, he showed a great passion for illustration and the comic world, comics being the reason why he started as a draftsman and cartoonist. It was not strange, during his school years, that the teacher caught Josep in the middle of class drawing in his notebook. Once he finished Elementary School, he started attending the Arts and Crafts School in his hometown, where he studied technical drawing from 1984 to 1988. During this period, he combined studies with small jobs in textile design, illustration, and caricatures.

From 1988 to 1989, he was called to serve in the military. At the end of this period, he felt the need to continue with his education but focused on what motivated him the most, "The Portrait." He then went to the Fine Arts School of Alcoy, where he did not stay longer than three months since the education he was receiving there did not match his expectations and interests. After that, he registered at the Superior School of Saint Carlos of Valencia, but soon he started to feel a deep disaffection with the academic system; he did not hesitate to express his disagreements with the faculty, which led him to quit some months later. Borrell's rebelling against the artistic education he so desired turned him to become a nonconformist artist who struggled to achieve his goals his own way. Upon his return to Alcoy, he started taking classes at the Academy-Studio of the artist Paco Egea, where Josep finally felt comfortable with what he did. It was here where he acquired a solid base on drawing. This was a very busy period for the artist since he combined his studies in the academy with a part-time job in a furniture store, in addition to his night sessions painting the first commissions he had of pastel portraits. He felt such a passion for painting that he would spend weekends on the beach, painting portraits, improving his technique, and trying to capture the features of people with the fewest strokes possible.

It was this last activity that provided Borrell with a masterful skill in portrait art. Once he mastered drawing, he began developing his oil technique, which he learned to manage with the help of different artists in their studios. It did not take long for him to master the practice since he had a very solid formation to lean on. In 1997, given that his work as a portrait artist allowed him to have economic independence, he settled down and married his wife Aranza. In 2002, he had his first exhibition in The Medical Society of Malaga.

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He is a great admirer of Sorolla and Dali, as he looks to adapt the color and light of Sorolla with the surrealist touches of Dali. Borrell goes as far as including a transgressor element that breaks the relaxation that his nudes transmit, for example, the beetle, which is in homage to Dali, who used to paint ants in his paintings.

Josep is an unassuming person who enjoys the natural beauty of things. He does not like urban environments, neither cars nor impositions of the present-day society, which drag us into an artificial and stressed life. The artist lives in the country with his wife, Aranza, and his son Izan. His hobbies include going on long walks in the countryside and singing with an amateur rock band, which rehearse every Saturday. Rock and Heavy Metal are his favorite kinds of music, and KISS is his favorite rock band. He is also interested in photography.