

JUAN BUTTEN

Visual Artist — Writer

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PROFESSIONAL PROFILE

Juan Batten is a multidisciplinary artist originally from the Dominican Republic. He works in painting, sculpture, drawing, and writing, and is recognized for his innovative sculptural installations made from solid waste materials, as well as his diverse painting series. His most notable project, "La Balsa," has been exhibited across multiple cities and countries, establishing him as a reference point for sustainability through art. His book *El Pollo que Aprendió a Volar* went through six editions in a single year in his home country. In 2025, he received the BRIO Award in Visual Arts / Mixed Media from the Bronx Council on the Arts.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

1997 – Present — Artist

Since the late 1990s, Batten has created illustrations for books and magazines. He also began experimenting with small-scale sculptures made from plastic waste, without realizing at the time that his work was promoting sustainability. He has exhibited his work in the Dominican Republic, Canada, and the United States.

2007 – Present — Poetry and Narrative

Committed to exploring his identity, Batten writes about issues that concern him, especially the environment and the dangers facing his country's beaches and rivers. His literary practice complements his visual art, creating a synergy between both disciplines. His focus on literature and visual art has led him to research graffiti in his country and its influence on contemporary popular culture, including music, fashion, film, and architecture. He actively engages with his audience through social media, readings, and talks.

EDUCATION

1985 — IPM Music Academy, *San Cristóbal, Dominican Republic*

1998 — Miguel Valenzuela Academy

1999 — National School of Fine Arts, *Santo Domingo*

2003 — Microgallery Educational Center, Digital Art Studies

2006 — Autonomous University of Santo Domingo (UASD), Fine Arts

EXHIBITIONS

2004 — Agro & Nature Painting, *Instituto Agrario Dominicano*

2005 — Illustration, Agenda Copel S.A.

2006 — Creativos México, *Video Art*

2007 — Transgresiones Morfológicas, *Instituto Cultural Dominico-Americano, DR*

2008 — Catarsis, *Comisión Nacional de la UNESCO, DR*

2019–2023 — FASE UNO, *Centro Cultural de España, DR*

May–Sept. 2024 — Casas + Islas, *Punto Urban Art Museum, Salem, MA*

Oct. 2024 — Id Libitum, *Aedra Fine Art Exhibition, New York*

Nov.–Dec. 2024 — 20th Annual Small Works Show, *440 Gallery, Brooklyn* — curated by Pam Wong

Aug. 20, 2025 — La Balsa — Screening, *Auditorium, Bronx Library Center, Kingsbridge*

An audiovisual presentation celebrating the BRIO Award 2025, showcasing Juan Batten's artistic journey and creative vision. Written and directed by Rosa Valdez.

Feb. 11–Mar. 15, 2026 — BRIO Retrospective (2021–2025), *Bronx River Art Center (BRAC)*

Presented by the Bronx Council on the Arts. Two of his works were selected: *Mall Rural* (2023) and *Se Vende Hielo* (2025). With thanks to the Bronx Council on the Arts (BCA), Jesús López-Jensen, Alejandra Delfin, and Lucia Warck-Meister.

AWARDS & RECOGNITION

2025 — BRIO Award — Visual Arts / Mixed Media, *Bronx Council on the Arts, NY*

2024 — Finalist, Homiens Award, *Fall Exhibition, NY*

PUBLICATIONS

- *Antes de Partir* — Poetry, 2007
- *Concilio de Voces* — Poetry, 2009
- *El Pollo que Aprendió a Volar* — Fables, 2012 (ISBN 978-9945-481-10-5)
- *Por Amor a Cecilia* — Novel, 2013 (ISBN 978-9945-481-20-4)
- *Esperanza de Libertad* — 2015
- *KOALA: Crónicas del Abismo* — Unpublished

MEMBERSHIPS

- Member of the Dominican College of Visual Artists (CODAP) — Since 2005
- Founder of La Colmena Collective, an artistic movement dedicated to research and outreach in visual art

ARTISTIC FOCUS

Juan Batten explores the intersection of environmental issues, community, and contemporary art, with a particular focus on the global plastic crisis. Through the use of recycled materials and urban and beach waste, his work reflects on humanity's impact on nature. He also fosters community participation and dialogue on sustainability and social responsibility through art workshops, mentoring emerging artists, and exploring new techniques in painting, mixed media, digital art, and literature.