

PlaceMakers

JOHN COX



a DESTINATION GUIDE
'The Bahamas'

BY ROSEWOOD HOTELS & RESORTS



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01 JOHN COX TAKING A STROLL AROUND CHARLES TOWN

WHAT *is* PLACE MAKING?

*Creativity and culture is the lifeblood of a city.
It inspires the stories born from adventure. It
speaks to the very soul of the explorer.*

PlaceMakers are the embodiment of Rosewood's commitment towards elevating culture and community.

By partnering with PlaceMakers, we together explore the stories of local destinations – with the intention of crafting inspired Rosewood journeys that promote immersive property experiences, meaningful connections, and individual well-being.

Our ecosystem stems from our PlaceMakers – We invite you to explore the world with Rosewood through a local lens. To uncover the traditions, to both learn and create alongside the innovators of art, style, food, family, sustainability and health.

This approach pairs seamlessly with Rosewood's core philosophy, that A Sense of Place® exists beyond the physical form and is also discovered in the intangible essence of community.

Let Rosewood be your cultural concierge. Discover our curated experiences and in-depth destination guides, enriching your global exploration.

JOHN COX

words by
SAMANTHA BROOKS

HOME *and*
COMMUNITY





03 JOHN VISITING THE STUDIO OF ARTIST, ANTONIUS ROBERTS

introducing PLACEMAKER, JOHN COX

Born in 1973 - the same year as Nassau's independence - John Cox is the capital's preeminent local artist and curator. Best described as a raw yet delicate expression reflecting an eclectic range of subjects and ideas, his work is rooted in the human experience and has been exhibited around the world including France, Italy, Germany, Hong Kong and the US, as well as part of international exhibitions at Art Basel.

Cox was raised in Nassau and attended the Rhode Island School of Design receiving a BFA in Illustration and MAT in art education.

He began his career at the College of The Bahamas as a faculty member in the art department, teaching both studio as well as theory courses for over a decade. His career path led him to The National Art Gallery of The Bahamas in 2003 working initially in museum education before

he became the Chief Curator in 2013. Cox moved to Baha Mar as the Creative Arts Director in 2014 to oversee the resort's curation, art programming, gallery spaces, exhibits, and events before recently being made Executive Director of Arts and Culture for the resort. He lives on the island with his wife and two children.



What misconceptions do you find most people have about the Bahamas?

JOHN: That it's all about the sun, sand, and sea, or relaxing by the pool. Especially in Nassau, we have a rich history and culture. For instance, we were a British colony until 1973, so most of our customs and lifestyle is rooted in the British perspective. Our lawyers practice British law with capes and gowns, and you see the influence in our architecture too.

04 JOHN IN HIS ART STUDIO



05 A STUNNING VIEW FROM THE CLIFFS AT CLIFTON HERITAGE NATIONAL PARK

How did you first come to work with Baha Mar?

JOHN: I was the chief curator at the National Art Gallery of the Bahamas for three years. At first, we were going to do something in tandem at Baha Mar, but ultimately, it was a better fit to develop the programming here separately. The hospitality industry is 70% of our country's income, and by showcasing

and representing Bahamian artists here, we can also combine culture into the visitor's experience, fusing art with travel.

What makes what you do different compared to other hotels and resorts in the Caribbean?

JOHN: Bahamian art is so much more diverse and broader than what the average person might assume, and we've been able to share so much of it at the property. I don't see a lot of other examples of this in the region at this scale. In the public areas across the resort, we probably have about 700 original works of art, with our convention center claiming about 40% of that. In private rooms, suites, and offices we have well over

6,000 reproductions—all of which are Bahamian works. Specifically at the Rosewood, we have 100 original works in public areas—and we have a partnership with a local collector named Dawn Davies, who has one of the largest collections, with more than 3,000 works, many of which she lets us display on loan. Some of the artists you can see on property are Melissa Alcina, Kendal Hanna, Heino Schmid, Max Taylor, Dave Smith, Thierry Lamare, Brent Malone, and so many more.



06 A SERIES OF PAINTINGS CURATED BY JOHN COX IN CAFE BOULUD THE BAHAMAS



07 JOHN COX AT HOME IN FRONT OF HIS OWN PAINTING ENTITLED VICTORY IS MINE

How do you want people to feel when they look at the art on property?

JOHN: One of the criticisms that hotels often receive is that their art is like music in an elevator: bland. We took that as a challenge, so that when someone is sitting in one of the restaurants, like Café Boulud, and sees a piece, it should spark curiosity. We want the guests to point and say, “What’s that?” and to then be stimulated by the answer. It’s not about matching the art to the sofa in front of it. It’s about enhancing the experience.

What advice would you give someone who says that they don’t “get” art?

JOHN: I think it’s visceral. You have to feel it. What turns people away is the elite, stuffy, academic, heady thing. They aren’t sure what to think, but you don’t need to force it. If the art is working on any level, it can speak to many people. We see it all the time, when let’s say, a wife will drag her husband to our Fairwind Tour. He might come in hesitant but leave feeling really inspired. Plus, some of the art that we curate isn’t designed to be “positioned.” It’s more like it’s a part of your memory.



08 OPEN AIR MURAL BY ALLAN PACHINO WALLACE (D'AGUILAR ART FOUNDATION)

a PERFECT WEEKEND *in* THE BAHAMAS

AN ARTWALK DOWNTOWN

AN ARCHITECTURAL TOUR ON BICYCLE

EXPLORING NEARBY ISLANDS

FOR SOUVENIRS: LOCAL ARTISAN BOUTIQUES

AN ART WALK DOWNTOWN

There's an area called Charles Town, which is where the National Gallery is, and you can do a whole loop of art-driven sites. Start at the National Gallery, where they have a great curatorial team and are a beautiful contrast to what we have. Their exhibitions are constantly changing, but some of my favorite pieces in their permanent collection are the woodcuts from Max Taylor as well as the rare works from Brent Malone, who is like our local Picasso—he had a lot of different artistic phases and influenced a generation of artists that followed. Even just the architecture of the gallery itself is striking, as it's set within an old, protected house.

Down the hill from that, just north, is the D'Aguilar Art Foundation (DAF), which is an organization belonging to another collector and businessman. They have a small, traditional Bahamian house with collections, as well as collaborations with local artists.

Nearby is John Watling's, a distillery that makes great rum and vodka, which is also set within an old Bahamian home. It's a gorgeous space. After, head to Graycliff, which is a series of restaurants, with a cigar bar, and a wine cellar too. It's a cool space that occupies the whole street and even has its own chocolate factory.

Finally, there's Hillside House. A studio with a multi-purpose operation that includes a gallery, residences with artists, and even a food operation.



09 THE COLORFUL SIGHTS OF CHARLES TOWN IN DOWNTOWN NASSAU



10 SACRED SPACE|GENESIS GARDEN AT CLIFTON HERITAGE NATIONAL PARK

AN ARCHITECTURAL TOUR ON BICYCLE



11 JOHN'S FAVORITE ESCAPE

There are fantastic residential neighborhoods on the eastern end of the island, all with great architecture. My father was a structural engineer, and growing up, whenever we had guests, he would take them on a tour of this area. It's a lot of mid-century modern mixed

with colonial. A good taxi driver can take you through it easily, but it's more fun to rent a bike at Cycle Unlimited. They have a cycling club, and it's easy to get one of the club members to take you for a ride around. It's also a hobby of mine.

EXPLORING THE NEARBY ISLANDS

If you're here for an extended amount of time, it's lovely to have a boat take you around through the Exumas. On a fast boat, you can be there within an hour. Then, you can visit all of the cays. Sure, you can do the famous thing of swimming with pigs, but I wouldn't lead with that. The cays are mind-bogglingly beautiful. The water, the architecture of the private homes on land...it's all stunning. We live here, and even though it's so close, anytime my wife and I take our kids, we feel like we're at another world. It's pure turquoise Zen.

If you like diving or snorkeling, there's also lots of relics too with shipwrecks you can explore, as well as planes that went down ages ago. And you might see one island that's covered with hundreds of iguanas and another that is surrounded by nerf sharks.



12 DIVING IN THE EXUMAS



13 SWIMMING WITH THE PIGS



14 WOOD SCULPTURE
DESIGNED BY
ANTONIUS ROBERTS



15 BAHAMA HAND PRINTS

FOR SOUVENIRS

The Bahamas are known for their handprinted textiles and straw goods. There's a place called Bahama Hand Prints, which was run by Pamela Burnside in its early days. They make great fabric used for garments and bags. It's a full-on Bahamian company that's stood the test of generations — then regenerated again. The garments, bags, and tableware are great to take home.

There are also generations of straw market vendors too, which is one of the traditions that's survived through the years. The best area to find them is the Craft Cottage that's connected to Doongalik Studios. "Doongalik" is the sound of junkanoo, the sounds of cow bells and goatskin drums. The Craft Cottage is discerning about the people they work with, and you can find jewelry, bags, and baskets, which incorporate early Lucayan weaving techniques found in Red Bays Andros.

16 A HANDMADE STRAW BAG FROM
CRAFT COTTAGE



17 NATIONAL ART GALLERY OF THE BAHAMAS

ROSEWOOD CONNECTION:

*John Cox shares some of his favorite things
on property.*



18 JOHN ENJOYING AN OLD FASHIONED COCKTAIL IN THE MANOR BAR

1. One of most inspiring places to me is the Manor Bar. Their Old Fashioned is lovely, and they have photos by Jacob Kumly, who had studio in late 1800s. His works are from late 1880s and '90s and to see how landscape has changed is inspirational.

2. On the north side of the property are these Point Cinna trees, which are stunning. They're so rich, they borderline on being overgrown. It's almost like a different ecosystem.

3. Some of my favorite works are by Heino Schmid and Tessa Whitehead. Heino's works manage to capture a rawness and elegance at the same time. It's like he harnesses that balance of the past and the present all in one immediate and instinctual gesture. Tessa's works explore the landscape in a way that allows the viewer to discover for themselves their place both familiar and distant spaces.

CRAFTING CULTURE THROUGH COMMUNITY



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