

Stephen Friedman Gallery

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Reflecting on our favourite arts and culture moments of 2021
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After a year spent indoors, 2021 was one of cautious optimism that saw a return of the events we love and a reopening of the spaces we missed. With vaccines and the wearing of face masks, we were able to once again enjoy live music, theatre, museums, community festivals, and more. Below, WBUR's arts and culture team reflects on moments from the year that provided reprieve, whether it was through a trip to the ICA or watching a movie at the cinema.

Jeffrey Gibson's 'Infinite Indigenous Queer Love'



Image: Jeffrey Gibson, "INFINITE INDIGENOUS QUEER LOVE," 2020. (Courtesy Jason Wyche/Sikkema Jenkins & Co., New York)

What does it mean to be queer and of colour? I think about this all the time as a Black queer artist myself. When I saw that Jeffrey Gibson, a queer Choctaw-Cherokee artist, and his exhibit "Infinite Indigenous Queer Love" was coming to the deCordova Sculpture Park and Museum, I was ecstatic. I am an art lover, that's true, but it's different when you feel an artist or their work speaks directly to your personal experiences. Gibson and his exploration of identity says something important about the times we live in. Often, those of us who occupy multiple marginalized identities must envision our own futures in which we are free.

"Infinite Indigenous Queer Love" does exactly that. I found myself entranced, not just by Gibson's generous use of colour and texture but also by the assemblage of different materials into cohesive pieces that exalt love and identity that exist beyond the binaries of gender and sexuality. One of the most stunning parts of the exhibit is the massive hanging fringed pieces, a reclamation and reinterpretation of fringe, a material often used in traditional Native wear. Gibson does not labour too long on the oppressions queer and trans Indigenous people endure but instead seeks to educate through celebration. We are so much more than our pain and Gibson epitomizes that in his work by envisioning a past, present and future in which queer people of colour are free. —Arielle Gray