



FriendsWithYou

FriendsWithYou is the fine art collaborative of Samuel Borkson and Arturo Sandoval III, working collectively since 2002 with the sole purpose of spreading the positive message of Magic, Luck, and Friendship™. Known for immersive installations and interactive artworks, FriendsWithYou invites viewers of their work to reconnect with and reinterpret their lives through communal experiences. The artists work in a variety of mediums including painting, sculpture, large-scale experiential installations, live performances, and more recently, virtual reality and animation. Incorporating the healing arts, modern rituals, animism, and unified symbols, their works are meant to prompt a wide spectrum of untapped emotions, from playfulness to self-reflection, enabling both personal and shared experiences. FriendsWithYou's mission is to cultivate moments of spiritual awareness and powerful, joyous interactions.

Forging their own brand of post-pop visual language a la Takashi Murakami, Arturo Herrera and Yayoi Kusama, FriendsWithYou takes a spiritual and serene approach to form and figure. Their reductive and simplified use of geometric abstraction always contains a whimsical touch. Taking Nicolas Bourriaud's Relational Aesthetics to heart and hand, the artists make art of the Post-Internet era. Alongside the body of works of Murakami, Jeff Koons, and Damien Hirst, FriendsWithYou is a new breed of artist, actively generating culture beyond the traditional art boundaries and reshaping the current contemporary art scene. By blurring the dividing line between perceived "high" and "low" art, as explained in Murakami's Superflat essay, FriendsWithYou utilizes other mediums like design and limited edition products from a fine art

perspective. Their most important artistic tactic to foster these interpersonal relationships is the use of play. By reinterpreting religious traditions, symbols, and spiritual practices, FriendsWithYou inverts solemn and serious ideas through the act of play to open up a connection to the divine. Many FriendsWithYou works reference toys because they are meant for play, a tool for unstructured free association and interaction. Their sculptures and paintings, inflatables, and objects are meant to trigger the buried, neglected urges and yearnings that a seasoned art viewer may not expect to have activated; playfulness, laughter and inquisitiveness, with an end result of feeling connected. Influenced by the simple happiness found in everyday life, FriendsWithYou's work is designed to be accessible to all.

Throughout the last fourteen years, FriendsWithYou has gained international recognition as pioneers in the field of experiential art. FriendsWithYou installations are fully immersive experiences that draw audiences into a magical world where the line between imagination and reality is blurred. What started as hand-sewn toy sculptures have grown into much larger than life projects and national and international exhibitions. FriendsWithYou's work has been exhibited at the Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo; Art Basel in Miami Beach; Dallas Contemporary; Galerie Perrotin, Miami; Haus der Kulturen der Welt, Berlin; The High Line, New York; The Indianapolis Museum of Art; Marine Projects, Los Angeles; Museum of Contemporary Art Santa Barbara; and most recently at the Santa Monica Pier in Los Angeles. FriendsWithYou works are in the permanent collections of the Museum of Contemporary Art North Miami, The Goldman Family Collection, Montblanc Collection, amongst others.

FriendsWithYou released their Rizzoli published monograph *We Are FriendsWithYou* in May 2014. The book spans their career thus far, and features contributions by musician, producer and longtime collaborator Pharrell Williams; director, filmmaker, and spiritual guru Alejandro Jodorowsky; and Dallas Contemporary executive director Peter Dorshenko.

FriendsWithYou actively works to spread the message of connectivity around the world, with a simple mission to become Friends-With-You.

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