

ARTIST PROFILE

DECLARATION
APRIL 21st –
SEPTEMBER 9th

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You Belong Here (Flamingo II), Institute for Contemporary Art, Richmond, Virginia, 2018. Photo: Departure Point Films

TAVARES STRACHAN

You Belong Here (Flamingo II) is both a question and affirmation that prompts a set of considerations around who the “you” may be, what it means to “belong” or not to belong, and where ‘here’ may be. This highly visible neon encourages us to imagine infinite possibilities around how one can be seen and welcomed within radically shifting environments.

This site-specific installation for the ICA continues Tavares Strachan’s ongoing series using this declarative phrase, which he first used in 2013. Each context shapes its meaning. Here it offers a declaration of welcome that reinforces the ICA’s intention to serve as an inclusive platform, while also introducing complex propositions to the institution as it engages with diverse communities. This work will remain on view for an extended period of time.



Installation view, *You Belong Here*, Prospect 3, New Orleans. Image courtesy of the artist.



ON VIEW

You Belong Here (Flamingo II),
2018
Neon
Courtesy of the artist

LOCATION

Newmarket
Sculpture Terrace

RELATED PROGRAMS

PUBLIC ILLUMINATION

April 11, 2018
9pm

STAFF PICK

Rachel Southard
Donor Relations Associate
July 5, 2018
12:30pm

Visit ICAVCU.ORG for event details and ticketing information. All events are free and open to the public.

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“You belong Here” hits at the heart of our cultural misunderstanding. It has a vibe of warmth, but underneath there is brittle hardness...Hopefully it represents a way into the future where we can’t ignore the gray area. A future where things can get a bit more muddy, and it’s not so easy to pick sides.

—Tavares Strachan

Excerpt from interview by Jovana Stokić and Tavares Strachan for BOMB Magazine: “Tavares Strachan by Jovana Stokić” September 5, 2013

ON ALTRUISM:

I guess my altruism has more to do with rigor than it has to do with a sense of generosity. People should think about things a little more. People like to generalize, and there’s a lot of miscommunication when they do. Your own agenda sometimes can be confused: Whether you’re doing something for reasons that you think are. When you become rigorous, you maybe think about those things, and perhaps you don’t do those things for the reasons you thought you were doing them. This is why it is more about rigor than it is a sense of exchange, or generosity, or giving. I mean, maybe those things come down the line, but first you have to ask yourself those difficult questions.

ON THE MEANING OF “YOU BELONG HERE”:

Welcomed and also challenged. For me, it goes back to this idea of singular responsibility—how if I pick up trash, then it helps everything else. But mostly that was how individuals relate to groups, and how individual cultures and global cultures function. Having you walk into that room was supposed to be a little bit disarming, kind of a Venus flytrap, maybe hypnotizing you a little bit, drop your guard. John Baldessari said something like, “A work of art is good at pointing out other ideas.”

ON THE EMOTIONAL PULL OF “YOU BELONG HERE”:

Yes, it’s very emotional. For me, the thing about that work is: When you read it, you say it. I wanted to make a piece that you would own, as a viewer. So when you say “I belong here” or “You belong here,” you own it. You’re now in the driver’s seat.

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BIOGRAPHY



You Belong Here (Flamingo II), Institute for Contemporary Art, Richmond, Virginia, 2018. Photo: Departure Point Films

Born 1979, Nassau, Bahamas; Lives in New York, New York

Tavares Strachan is a conceptual artist who explores aspects of science, art, and the environment to create large-scale works. Many of his projects investigate the nature of invisibility, calling into question the conditions that frame and legitimize certain cultural knowledge and histories while obscuring and erasing others.

Strachan received his BFA in Glass from the Rhode Island School of Design and his MFA from Yale University. Select solo exhibitions: Coachella Valley, California (2017); Prospect 3 Biennial in New Orleans, Louisiana (2014); Bahamas National Pavilion at the 55th Venice Biennale, Italy (2013); Biennale De Lyon, France (2013); Dvir Gallery in Tel Aviv, Israel (2012); Seen/Unseen, undisclosed exhibition location in New York (2011); MIT List Visual Arts Center in Cambridge, Massachusetts (2010); Institute of Contemporary Art in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania (2009); and Aubrey Sayle Primary School in Nassau, Bahamas (2006). Select group exhibitions: Queens Museum in New York (2014); Louisiana Museum of Modern Art in Humlebaek, Denmark (2013); Various Small Fires in Los Angeles, CA (2013); 5th Moscow Biennale, Russia (2013); Mattress Factory in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania (2008); Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art in Hartford, Connecticut (2007); and Cincinnati Art Center, Ohio (2004). Select collections Include: Central Bank Bahamas, Museo de Arte Moderno, Santo Domingo, Nassau International Airport, and Governors General's Office, New Providence, Bahamas. Select awards include: LACMA Art and Technology Artist Grant (2014), MIT Artist-in-Residence (2009-10), Tiffany Foundation Grant (2008), and National Seal of the Bahamas, Stamp Design (1996).

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