

TAVARES STRACHAN LAUNCHES TOGETHER PROJECT

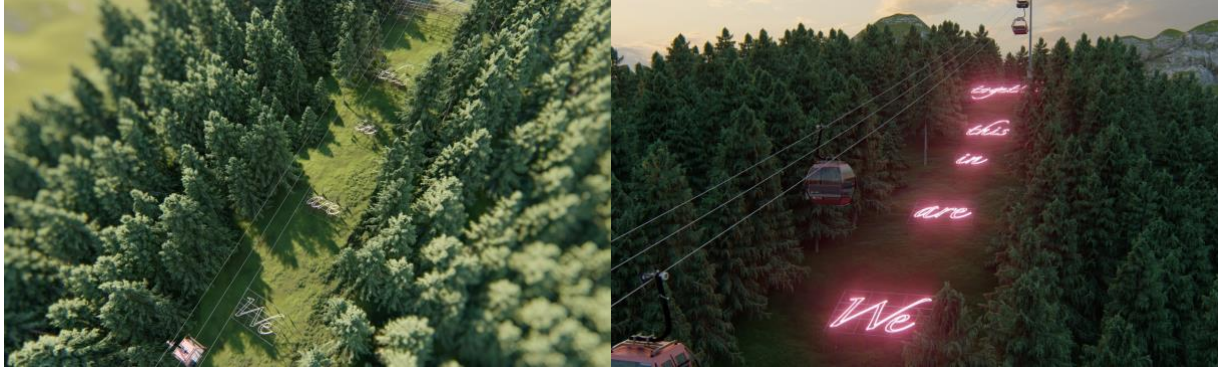


Rendering of "Together," 2020. Neon, transformers, steel, concrete, tube supports, rich-lite. Variable dimensions.
Courtesy of the Artist

(Telluride, CO — April 30, 2020) — Internationally renowned artist **Tavares Strachan** is launching **Together**, a far-reaching community engagement project in Telluride, Colorado informed by his long-term collaboration with local residents. The project is conceptually grounded in an obliquely simple message: WE ARE IN THIS TOGETHER. As a call for unity, the project gestures to a utopic provocation, but for the artist, it is a call to action. The Together project will incorporate philanthropy, social engagement, conversations, and sculpture.

Tavares chose the phrase WE ARE IN THIS TOGETHER to ground this project five years ago. But at this particular moment in time, the universal abstracted text has taken on new significance as a truism for our new local, national and global realities. In early March 2020, the discussion surrounding the Together project pivoted as President Trump and every company, organization, entity and individual invoked the phrase. The local Telluride community turned to this text as a banner for this particular social moment. This prophetic public proposition is more than a work of art. It will serve as a historical marker and as an umbrella for ongoing community work to mobilize and effect change in the way only art can do.

The project will culminate in a text-based neon sculpture, WE ARE IN THIS TOGETHER, which will be sited publicly on the slopes outside of Mountain Village. This sculpture is a call to arms: an anthem for our political, social, economic, cultural moment. This universalizing message is humanist and grounded in the idea that collectivity, unity, integrity, and identity are inextricably bound. This is a mode of address—typical of Strachan's lexicon—that acts as an effort to mobilize community and societal change, and make a gesture of solidarity. This is the first site-specific contemporary art project produced by **The Telluride Foundation**, working in collaboration with the **Ah Haa School for the Arts** and the town of **Mountain Village**.



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The text aims to be a physical manifestation of a greater, community-wide Together project that elucidates the themes behind the work: equality, democracy, and other core tenets of humanism. Strachan's interest lies in shifting perceptions about place, emphasizing the people and the work here, illustrating the diversity of the local and surrounding communities, and creating tools to aid neighbors in need.

"This project seeks to bring the community together and to add to the narrative of Telluride. I was interested in shedding light on local issues around housing, climate, food, education, and immigration. It is about coming together to research and address some of these questions at a local level that resonates more broadly in our current climate. In this moment of nationalism, it is particularly difficult to manage global issues without zooming in on local issues," said artist Tavares Strachan.

"The artist has created a text based sculpture that encapsulates the ethos of our work in a profound way. We are proud to be a partner in this project. When a community comes together to address issues toward a common goal, they can solve their most difficult challenges," said **Paul Major, Telluride Foundation**.

Working with The Telluride Foundation, the Together project will include philanthropic efforts including fundraising for local food banks. To join us in these efforts, we encourage you to help the larger Colorado community one meal at a time: [FEEDING COLORADO](#).

weareinthistogether.co

About Tavares Strachan

Strachan was born in 1979 in Nassau, Bahamas, and currently lives and works between New York City and Nassau. He received a BFA in Glass from the Rhode Island School of Design in 2003 and an MFA in Sculpture from Yale University in 2006.

Strachan's work has been featured in numerous solo exhibitions including You Belong Here, Prospect 3. Biennial, New Orleans; The Immeasurable Daydream, Biennale de Lyon, Lyon; Polar Eclipse, The Bahamas National Pavilion 55th Venice Biennale, Venice; Seen/Unseen, Undisclosed Exhibition, New York; Orthostatic Tolerance: It Might Not Be Such a Bad Idea if I Never Went Home Again, MIT List Visual Arts Center, Cambridge; among others. He has been the recipient of numerous awards including 2019-20 Artist in Residence at the Getty Research Institute, 2018 Frontier Art Prize, and the Allen Institute's inaugural artist-in-residence in 2018, 2014 LACMA Art + Technology Lab Artist Grant, 2008 Tiffany Foundation Grant, 2007 Grand Arts Residency Fellowship, and 2006 Alice B. Kimball Fellowship.

About the Telluride Foundation

Since 2000, the Telluride Foundation has worked to improve the quality of life for residents, the workforce and visitors of the Telluride region. We meet the challenges of today and tomorrow with a focus on serving people, strengthening community organizations, addressing emerging and unmet needs and bolstering our region's economic ecosystem; all to Make More Possible for everyone living and working in the Telluride region. The community is our work.

About the Ah Haa School for the Arts

The Ah Haa School for the Arts is a vital component of the Telluride community, inspiring artists and audiences since 1991. A center for creative expression, Ah Haa offers diverse inspirational multi-media classes for both youth and adults alike. Artmaking is an integral part of humanity, challenging us to think about life in new and different ways, imagining a more hopeful future. Together is a call out to our community – and the larger world – to find connection and common ground through direct communication and action. Ah Haa will engage community members in this project through participatory events and programming for all ages – lectures, writing, performance, object making – to create a dialogue and self expression inspired by the text. Our hope is that participants and observers alike will be inspired to come together to create a better world.