

Tanja Hollander: Are you really my friend? **Photographer takes over museum social media en route to massive multimedia installation in 2017**



NORTH ADAMS, MASSACHUSETTS – *Are you really my friend?* a project by Maine-based artist Tanja Hollander, uses photography, text, and video to examine how social media has influenced the concept of friendship. *Are you really my friend?*, which has been displayed in segments around the world, will land in North Adams in March 2017. In winding her way toward MASS MoCA, the artist plans a series of social media takeovers, in which she and other artists will author the museum's social media.

Hollander originally conceived this project as a personal documentary to explore the difference between real-world friendships and virtual ones. In February 2011, after realizing that Facebook allows a great deal of connectivity with “friends” whom she had never met or spoken to in “real life,” Hollander set out to photograph 626 of her Facebook friends in their homes around the world. This working project evolved into a multimedia art experience that records how society is redefining existence through photography, portraits, and social media.

As part of the lead-up to the project's completion, Hollander will collaborate with MASS MoCA for a series of social media takeovers, inhabiting the museum's Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter posts.

“I have had so many experiences, learned so many lessons, and been struck by the depth and beauty of this country,” Hollander says of this project. “I continue to be blown away by creative people doing amazing things wherever I go.”

In *Are you really my friend?* Hollander delves into themes of privacy, contemporary culture, family structure, social networking, and human relationships in the 21st century. She plays off of the importance of profile pictures on Facebook through creating formal portraits of her friends in person and also examines how portraiture has developed since its prominence in aristocracy in the 18th and early 19th centuries. Though the project is rooted in Facebook, it goes beyond the superficial and brings together ideas of interpersonal connections, travel, and community in the modern world. Ultimately, Hollander intends the exhibition to be a “collection of portraits that create a window into the home as each subject defines it.”

Are you really my friend? consists of an extensive mix of photographs, video, data visualization/mining, travelogue, and landscape images. The exhibition also includes an interactive element in which viewers are asked to consider their own definition of a real friend. Find out more about the project at facebookportraitproject.com.

About the Artist

Tanja Alexia Hollander was born in St. Louis, Missouri, in 1972. She received a B.A. in photography, film, and feminist studies from Hampshire College in 1994. Her current project, *Are you really my friend?* will debut in its entirety at MASS MoCA in 2017. Sections of the project were recently exhibited at the Portland Museum of Art (Maine), Virei Viral (Rio de Janeiro, Brazil), and the Carl-Schurz-Haus (Freiberg, Germany). Receiving international media attention for the project, Hollander was invited to give a TEDxDirigo talk in 2012 and has lectured extensively at Demanio Marittimo.Km-278 (Marzocca, Italy), the University of Maryland, Clemson University, SXSW, and Facebook headquarters. Hollander is represented by Carroll and Sons in Boston, Massachusetts. She is currently a resident of Auburn, Maine.

About MASS MoCA

MASS MoCA is one of the world's liveliest (and largest) centers for making and enjoying today's most important art, music, dance, theater, film, and video. Hundreds of works of visual and performing art have been created on its 19th-century factory campus during fabrication and rehearsal residencies, making MASS MoCA among the most productive sites in the country for the creation and presentation of new art. More platform than box, MASS MoCA strives to bring to its audiences art experiences that are fresh, engaging, and transformative.

MASS MoCA's galleries are open 11am to 5pm every day except Tuesdays. The Hall Art Foundation's Anselm Kiefer exhibition is open seasonally, through November 2 or later. Gallery admission is \$18 for adults, \$16 for veterans and seniors, \$12 for students, \$8 for children 6 to 16, and free for children 5 and under. Members are admitted free year-round. For additional information, call 413.662.2111 x1 or visit massmoca.org.

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