

Lifestyle

Art as an Agent of Positive Change

An Interview with Romero Britto, Britto Central



Romero Britto's Deep Love (above), Always in Black (below) and Summer Bears sculpture (lower left)

EDITORS' NOTE Romero Britto (britto.com) has created a completely new expression that reflects his optimistic faith in the world around him. Alluding to influences of early and modern masters, Britto's pulsating colors, pop themes, and commanding compositions have led to his becoming one of the premier contemporary artists of his generation. Britto lived an extremely modest lifestyle while growing up among eight brothers and sisters in Recife, Brazil. However, his innate creativity allowed him to fill his life with vibrant color and images of a beautiful world. He traveled to Europe in 1983 to examine firsthand the art of the masters. After exhibiting in a few galleries and private shows, Britto was encouraged to travel to the U.S., where pop art was flourishing. He moved to Miami and set up a studio that was open to the public. Britto spent the next few years exhibiting and attracting the attention of many. In 1988, he was selected alongside Andy Warhol and Keith Haring for Absolut Vodka's "Absolut Art" campaign. Romero Britto has since been exhibited in galleries and museums in over 100 countries, including the Salon de la Société Nationale des Beaux Arts exhibition at the Carrousel du Louvre in 2008 and 2010. In December 2013, Maria Elena and Carlos Slim Domit invited Britto to be the first living artist to exhibit at Museo Soumaya. He has created public art installations for the O2 Dome (Berlin), John F. Kennedy Airport (New York), Cirque du Soleil at Super Bowl XLI, and has been credited with the largest monumental



Romero Britto

sculpture in Hyde Park (London) history. He served as an official artist for the 2010 World Cup and was appointed Ambassador to the 2014 FIFA World Cup Brazil. Britto's pop sensibility has since lent itself to many collaborations with such brands as Audi, Bentley, Coca-Cola, Disney, Evian, Hublot, Mattel, and Technomarine. He is an artistic activist for charitable organizations worldwide and, most of all, an artist who believes "art is too important not to share." He serves as a benefactor, donating time, art, and

resources to over 250 charitable organizations and sits on several boards, such as Best Buddies International and St. Jude's Children's Research Hospital. Britto was named an inaugural founding benefactor of the Harvard International Negotiation Program by Daniel Shapiro, a program that seeks peaceful resolution to modern conflict. Britto has been selected several times to be a speaker for the arts at the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland. A firm believer in the role of an artist as an agent of positive change, he is committed to developing and supporting the powerful role art plays in world issues.

How do you describe your work?

I create images that are very pleasing to my eyes and to my heart and I share these with people out there. One thing I realized through the years was that people are drawn to something that's positive and happy, and that describes the art that I create.

Are there certain characteristics that are a part of every Britto piece of art?

I put lots of love in my work. Maybe that is what it is, seeing love. I think that is one thing that is constantly in my work. I realized this after years of listening to people ask me about the love that I put in my art, the hope that my art conveys. This is displayed through colors and shapes.

How did growing up in Brazil impact your art?

Growing up in Brazil, my universe was very small. It was not very hopeful or full of dreams or full of encouragement.

So moving to U.S. had a very big impact on my life and it has been really amazing seeing everything unfold. Many people think my success has been fast and easy, but the truth is that it was very challenging. It has been a

mix of ups and downs, but at the end I have been very lucky.

You have had the opportunity to work with leading corporations and brands around the world. Will you discuss these partnerships?

Today's art world is not just about museums or galleries, it also includes huge corporations that have access to millions of people, such as Coca-Cola or Mattel, that I have had the pleasure of working with. They have an incredible history and heritage, and people believe in what they do.



I treasure these relationships because they bring my art to millions of people. It would be very hard for an artist to get this type of exposure without working with a company that reaches millions of people so quickly and so effectively.

Are you able to find time to visit schools and mentor young artists?

I used to visit many schools and colleges. I still try to do this as much as I can, but it is hard to find the time with the demand for my work. I enjoy sharing my life story to someone who is starting out in their career or thinking about being an artist.

I try as often as possible to be out there to share my story and I hope as I get much older that I am going to be able to do this even more. ●

