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ON WATER & FUTURE DREAMS

By Yulia Stroková



Miami-based visual artists and coral restoration advocates Beatriz Chachamovits and Randi Renate love the ocean more than anything. Their latest collaborative sculpture, *On Water and Future Dreams*, is a vibrant testament to this shared passion and a direct call to action.

The colorful dome-like installation, which debuted at the 2024 SCOPE Art Fair beachfront, is adorned with individually-cast coral shapes. These are crafted from durable cement and steel to withstand weather and curious human hands. Beatriz explains, “This material choice allows the piece to remain intact, unlike fragile ceramic replicas. It’s designed to endure and travel to new locations.”

Visitors are encouraged to pick, touch, and handle their favorite concrete coral components in their own way. Each of the 650 handmade pieces is equipped with a bolt, enabling participants to attach it to the structure. By rearranging the pieces on the domes’ frames, visitors create unique configurations and choose which colors and shapes to combine.

This tactile experience sparks a profound connection, allowing participants to hold and study the intricate details of the coral replicas. Each component is modeled after coral species native to Florida’s reef tract, such as elkhorn, staghorn, pillar coral, and sea fans.

“When you hold a piece of coral, you’re not just observing art — you’re part of its story,” Beatriz notes. “That interaction gives people ownership of how the piece is going to look, and that’s a huge deal in creating a lasting impression and keeping that memory alive.”

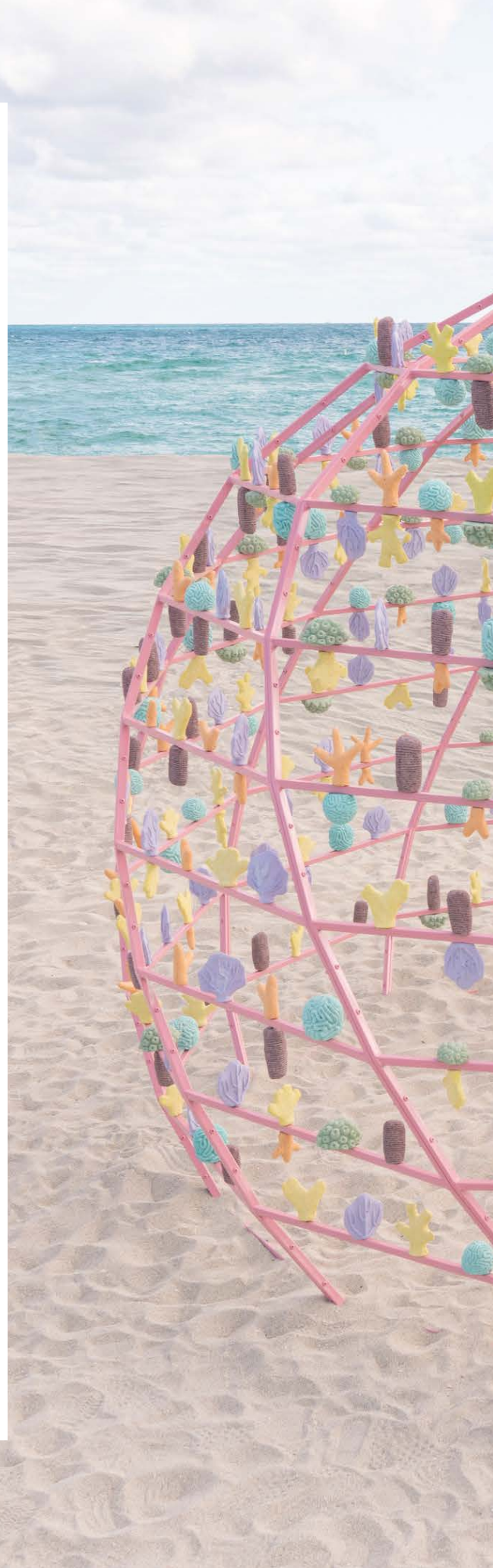
Corals are animals that live in colonies, maintaining a symbiotic relationship with tiny algae inside their tissues. The sculpture’s interactive design reflects this collective nature. Randi explains:

“Individual polyps grow together to form communities. This interdependence inspired our collaborative process and underscores the collective effort needed to replenish the ocean.

It’s also a beautiful metaphor for how we need to address the climate crisis: as a collective of humans, not just as individuals. Climate change affects us all, and it’s going to take a united, collective effort to mitigate its impacts.”

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Coral reefs play a vital role in protecting against extreme weather, shoreline erosion, and coastal flooding. They also help form Florida’s iconic sandy beaches and tranquil lagoons, which are central to the state’s tourism industry. However, **this coral reef ecosystem, home to around 1,400 distinct species, is gravely endangered by rising sea temperatures, ocean acidification, plastic pollution, and coral bleaching.**

While the sculpture acknowledges the stark reality of reef degradation, it also celebrates resilience and possibility. The choice to incorporate vibrant colors marks a pivotal shift in Beatriz’s artistic journey. “I want the message to be: **Hey, this is still alive. We still have time.** This is most incredible, phenomenal, magical, alien thing on our planet, and we need to care for it.”

This optimism extends to their mission to educate. The artists stress the importance of citizen science programs like Rescue a Reef and Coral Restoration Foundation’s outings.

The sculpture’s creation involved extensive collaboration with local marine scientists, including Dalton Hesley of the University of Miami’s Rosenstiel School of Marine and Atmospheric Research and Lad Atkins of the Frost Science Museum. Together, they selected several coral species to feature, each with ecological significance. For example, the pillar coral, now functionally extinct, underscores the urgent need for conservation. The project’s local sponsor, Bridge Initiative, led by Kate Fleming, highlights its mission to unite art, science, and community to restore this fragile yet mesmerizing marine ecosystem. ■

