

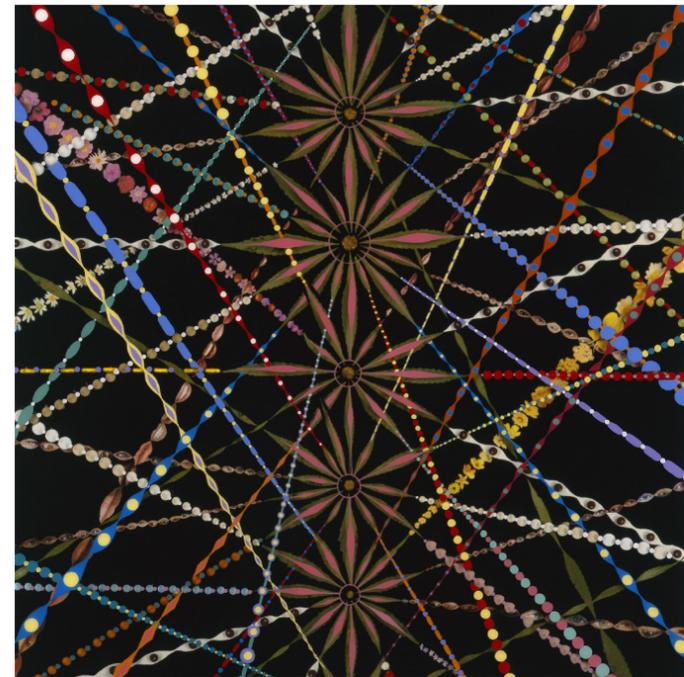
Altered States:



Jose ALVAREZ



Yayoi KUSAMA



Fred TOMASELLI



Leo VILLAREAL

04.02-07.17

at the NORTON MUSEUM of ART • www.norton.org

By **CHERYL BRUTVAN**,
Curator of Contemporary Art,
Norton Museum of Art



CAN ART HAVE A TRANSFORMATIVE power or is that a romantic and naive expectation? The ironic statement, by Bruce Nauman, in his early neon sculpture: *The true artist helps the world by revealing mystic truths* (1967), expresses the burden of both the artist and the viewer, while acknowledging the desire of each for a meaningful experience.

Through the unapologetically beautiful works by Jose Alvarez,



Yayoi Kusama, Fred Tomaselli and Leo Villareal, this exhibition challenges the viewer's perceptions of reality and the ability of art to create an altered and transformative experience. From the glistening and colorful collages of Alvarez, the obsessively painted *Infinity Nets* of Kusama, and the incredibly detailed paintings of Tomaselli, to Villareal's room-sized installation of vibrating color, these works are especially tempting to the eye—their seductive energy encourages, even demands, the viewers' participation and reflection.

Whether ultimately transcendent and altering or simply engaging, they each consider and explore the power of art and the path that may lead the viewer to another sense of self and place.

JOSE ALVAREZ,
THE ARRIVAL, 2008,
FEATHERS,
PORCUPINE QUILLS,
CRYSTALS, PAINT,
INK, PAPER
COLLAGE, AND
ACETATE ON PAPER,
72 X 44",
COURTESY OF THE
ARTIST AND
GAVLAK GALLERY,
PALM BEACH

Jose ALVAREZ

JOSE ALVAREZ INCORPORATES crystal (mica), feathers and quills (porcupine)—essential elements used in various ancient and new age rituals—in his collages. These creations are an extension of his early work as a performance artist, when he “channeled” a 2,000 year old shaman, named “Carlos”. For two decades, “Carlos” appeared to international audiences, numbering in the thousands, as Alvarez explored, examined and tested the nature of belief, charisma, and power, and how they intersect.

When Alvarez returned to making artworks, he transferred this knowledge into spectacular collages of natural elements, which may be imbued with meanings associated with science and mysticism or, simply, aesthetic appeal. Some are layered over brightly hued watercolors that verge on the hallucinogenic, others are composed entirely of single elements, such as a square of glimmering sheets of mica or a circle of peacock feathers, demonstrating the seductive power of modernism.



THE PROGRESS OF INSPIRATION, 2008, ENAMEL, GOUACHE, FEATHERS, PORCUPINE QUILLS ON MICA, 72 X 90", COURTESY THE ARTIST AND GAVLAK GALLERY, PALM BEACH



Yayoi KUSAMA

“BY OBLITERATING ONE’S individual self, one returns to the infinite universe,” said Yayoi Kusama, when reflecting on her obsessive paintings, *Infinity Nets*. From an early age, the artist endured extreme hallucinations in which she saw everyone and everything, in her world, covered in a net-like pattern. This perception and her obsessive compulsive behavior was manifest in her artwork, resulting in provocative, figurative sculptures and minimalist paintings, covered in highly detailed patterns, meticulously painted over the course of days. The intensity of her efforts and physical demands of their creation transcended the act of painting and carried Kusama into another state of reality.

INFINITY NETS
(ZATTOO), 2008,
© YAYOI KUSAMA,
2011, ACRYLIC
ON CANVAS,
57-1/4 x 57-1/4,
COURTESY
GAGOSIAN GALLERY,
NEW YORK,
PHOTOGRAPH BY
ROBERT MCKEEVER

Fred TOMASELLI

FRED TOMASELLI CREATES provocative and personal pictures that reflect both the interior and exterior worlds of the artist's experiences.

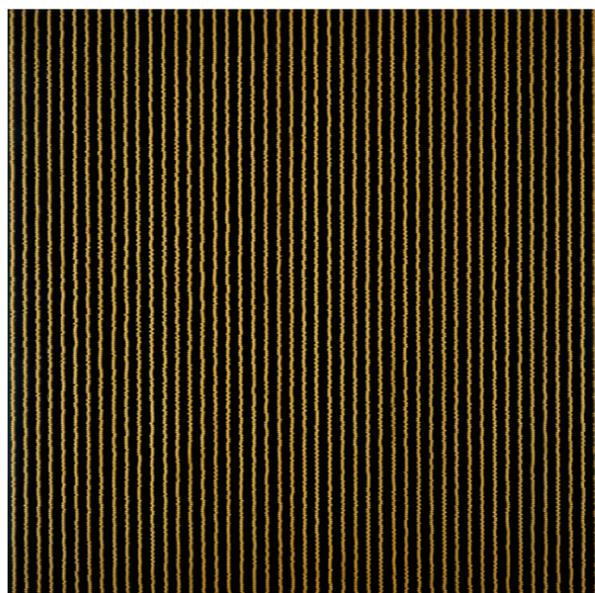
Tomaselli grew up in the Los Angeles area, during 1970s and 1980s, in proximity to theme parks focused on artificial worlds and illusions. It was a time and place characterized by cultural and physical experimentation achieved by natural and man-made substances. Together, these influences affected his artistic evolution, resulting in highly finished works that are both painting and collage. He uses materials such as leaves, pills, aspirin, photos and paper cutouts to create fantastic abstractions and images that embody altered states of reality—seductive and curious.

THIS PAGE (TOP TO BOTTOM):

DEAD EYED BIRD BLAST, 1997, COLLAGE, ACRYLIC AND RESIN ON WOOD PANEL, 60 x 60";
BRAIN WITH FLOWERS, 1990-1997, LEAVES, PILLS, PHOTO COLLAGE, ACRYLIC, AND RESIN ON WOOD PANEL, 24 x 24"; *13,000*, 1996, MIXED MEDIA, RESIN ON WOOD, 48 x 48"

OPPOSITE: *RADIATING COLUMN*, 2002, BOTANICAL MATERIAL, PILLS, ACRYLIC, PHOTO-COLLAGE, RESIN ON WOOD PANEL, 30 X 24"

IMAGES © FRED TOMASELLI,
COURTESY JAMES COHAN GALLERY, NY/SHANGHAI





Leo VILLAREAL

LEO VILLAREAL WORKS WITH light and color in its purest forms, creating discrete objects and magnificent installations which respond to architectural elements through his sensitive manipulation of shapes and passages of color, emanating from programmed LEDs (light emitting diodes). He has reinvented the use of color and light and integral elements of art, succeeding the efforts of Modern Masters, Dan Flavin and James Turrell, recognized for their transformative, even spiritual effects. The light works of Villareal have an extraordinary power both visually and, potentially, internally on the viewer. **ON VIEW**

FIRMAMENT, 2001, STROBE LIGHTS,
STEEL, CUSTOM SOFTWARE,
ELECTRICAL HARDWARE, 192 x 192 x 4",
UNIQUE, COURTESY GERING & LOPEZ GALLERY,
PHOTOGRAPHY BY JAMES EWING

NOTE: IMAGE IS REPRESENTATIONAL OF
ACTUAL WORK TO BE INCLUDED IN EXHIBITION.