

GAGOSIAN GALLERY

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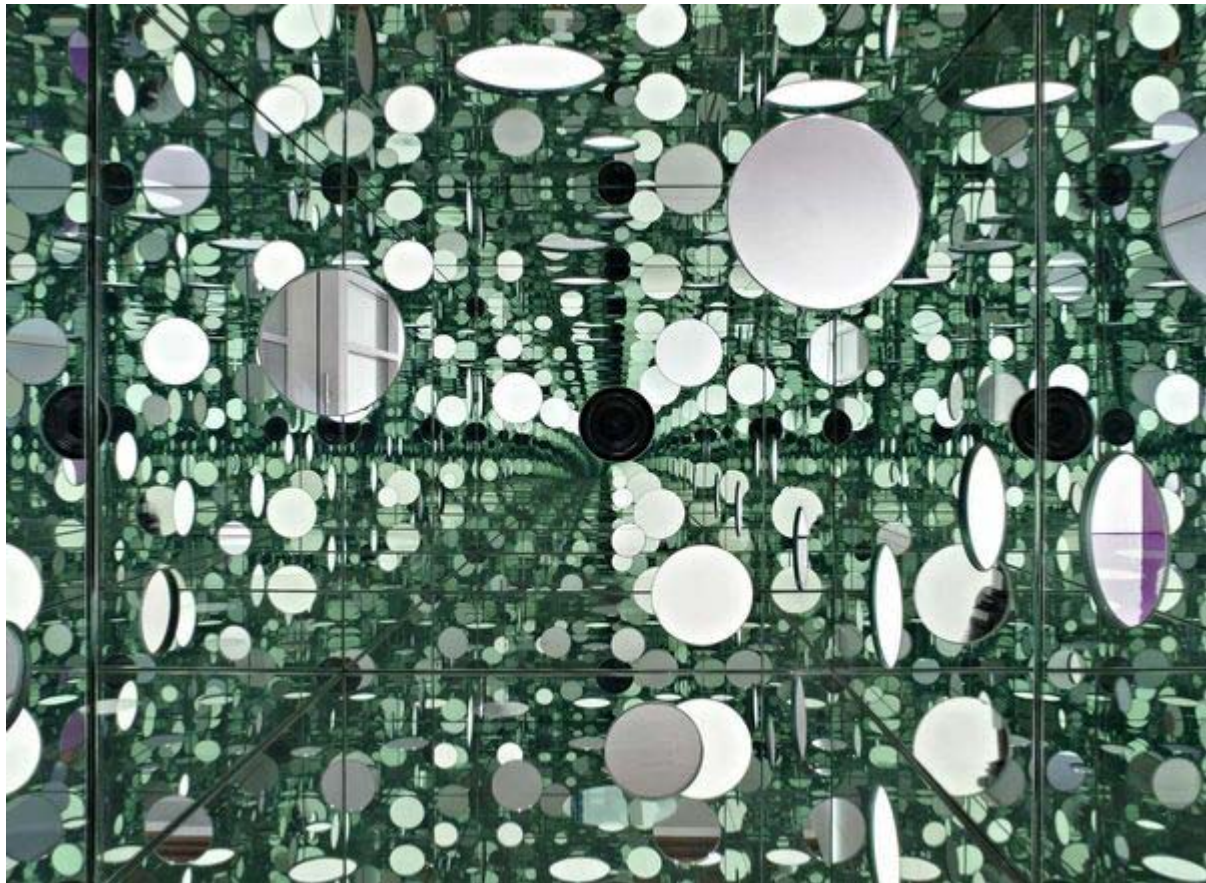


Culture Monster

ALL THE ARTS, ALL THE TIME

Art review: Eight artists at Gagosian Gallery

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An untitled exhibition at Gagosian Gallery invites visitors to improvise. That's a nice shift in emphasis.

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In America, artists are often called upon to do the improvisatory work. Viewers are meant to sit back and follow the moves the artists have made. In this eight-artist exhibition, the tables are turned: You're responsible for making meaning — for creating connections, cultivating relationships and construing poetry among the 13 works.

One of the best things about the exhibition is that it doesn't require you to make sense of every piece. Pleasure — not completion or thoroughness or inclusivity — is the point of improvisation, and some of the most satisfying instances leave out more than they include. Quality and quantity often work at cross-purposes.

Andy Warhol's "Silver Clouds," Pierre Huyghe's "Les Grandes Ensembles" and Yayoi Kusama's "Passing Winter" stand out for their efficiency. With startling clarity, casual virtuosity and graceful savvy, these Pop masterpieces compress loads of emotional complexity into simple setups. All make you happy to be alive — not only alert to your surroundings but in tune with the invisible rhythms pulsing through them.

Warhol's 26 helium-filled sculptures, drifting around a gallery, break Minimalism's stranglehold on heavy-duty significance by making a virtue of lightweight materials, airy reveries and cheap artifice.

Huyghe's black-and-white video, projected in a darkened gallery and accompanied by a dramatic score, depicts a pair of modern apartment towers on a stormy night. Various lights in various windows go on and off, sometimes slowly, as if in real time, and at other times swiftly and in unison with others, as if composed by the artist. Playing the beauty of randomness against the beauty of meticulously arranged patterns, this mesmerizing piece occupies a world big enough for both.

In the next gallery, Kusama's sculpture is a mirrored box with two or three peepholes in each of its sides and on its top. The magic happens when you look into one of the openings and see that what's inside takes up infinitely more space than what's outside, where you happen to be standing. Turning the world inside out, Kusama's accessible piece makes your body shrink and your mind expand as it conveys the sensation of an out-of-body experience.



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The other works, by Aaron Curry, Carsten Holler, Richard Wright and collaborators Edgar Cleijne and Ellen Gallagher, function like planets that orbit the trio of suns. They elaborate on experiences delivered by Warhol, Huyghe and Kusama, allowing visitors to customize our improvisations.

-- David Pagel

Gagosian Gallery, 456 N. Camden Drive, Beverly Hills, (310) 271-9400, through Sept. 2. Closed Sundays and Mondays. www.gagosian.com

Images, from top: Yayoi Kusama's "Passing Winter"; Andy Warhol's "Silver Clouds." Credit: Gagosian Gallery