

Inhotim opens Galeria Yayoi Kusama

*Gallery dedicated exclusively to the artist welcomes two immersive installations: **I'm Here, But Nothing** (2000) and **Aftermath of Obliteration of Eternity** (2009)*



Brumadinho, Minas Gerais – On July 16th, Instituto Inhotim inaugurates its twentieth permanent gallery dedicated to Yayoi Kusama (Matsumoto, Japan, 1929), one of the most renowned and emblematic artists working today. **Galeria Yayoi Kusama** features two of her works: ***I'm Here, But Nothing*** (2000) and ***Aftermath of Obliteration of Eternity*** (2009). They belong to the Instituto Inhotim Collection; the former was acquired in 2008 and the latter in 2009.

“The opening of Galeria Yayoi Kusama fulfills a central artistic ambition at Inhotim for the work of one of the most visionary artists of our time”, says Inhotim Co-Founder Allan Schwartzman. “This occasion enables us to provide a permanent presence for 3 of the artist’s most emblematic works, with ***Narcissus Garden*** (1966/2009), again drawn from Inhotim Collection, completing

▲
Galeria Yayoi Kusama at Instituto Inhotim. Photo credit: Ícaro Moreno

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the artist's presentation. Each work embodies a distinctly different environmental expression of the artist's creative universe: the optical transformation of a darkened room into a psychological place of sensory overload; a contemplative infinity room; and a garden of suspended flotation composed of countless metallic spheres hovering above the natural landscape of Inhotim. Galeria Yayoi Kusama embodies the highest goals of Inhotim to provide unique environments for the experience of exceptional large-scale artworks for a wide-ranging and diverse audience”.

Yayoi Kusama is recognized worldwide. Her work is characterized by a creative and captivating imagination, with a diversity of mediums and languages, especially in immersive installations that invite the spectator to enter her universe, sharpening their perception. Happenings, performances, paintings, sculptures, installations, literary works and film are part of the artist's creative world. The collective participation in her immersive installations gives meaning to her pieces, realizing an experience without limits, without boundaries, with colors, contrasts, lights and shadows.

The architectural project of Galeria Yayoi Kusama was developed by architects Fernando Maculan (MACH) and Maria Paz (Rizoma). It encompasses an area of 1,436.97 m² located on the Orange Path, near Galeria Cosmococa and the Trails Garden. The gallery's architectural proposal takes into consideration the protected space to house the installations and also the public, playing with the idea of waiting and lingering in a convivial space. “Given the importance of Yayoi Kusama's work and its well known appeal to large audiences, the gallery's project calls for a spacious waiting and preparation space,” explain the architects.

The landscaping of Galeria Yayoi Kusama features a winding path made of stones that unveils the gallery to the public, the curves of the path preceding it, arousing the curiosity of those who arrive. The landscaping project was carried out by Juliano Borin, Inhotim's Botanical Curator, Geraldo Farias, from Inhotim's Botanical Garden team, with contributions by Bernardo Paz. A multicolored tropical garden, with a touch of psychedelia, serves as inspiration for the planned garden where more than 4,000 bromeliads have been planted.

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ABOUT THE ARTIST

Repetitive patterns mark the trajectory of Yayoi Kusama's artwork since her childhood drawings, the same time when, due to her mental health condition, she started to experience hallucinations involving recurring polka dots. Her desire to become an artist, along with family conflicts and lack of support for this endeavor, made Kusama move to the United States in the late 1950s. It was at one of her first exhibitions in New York that the artist became known for her large-scale Infinity Net Painting. As she experimented with a number of mediums and languages, Yayoi Kusama conceived increasingly audacious artistic projects for the conservative context of the time, expressing herself politically and proposing the liberation of the body through happenings and performances.

In Kusama's work there is a overall idea that connects her works as a whole and accompanies her throughout her career - the concept of self-obliteration, which consists in the abolition of individuality in order to become one with the universe. This is expressed in the title of one of the works that are in the new gallery at Inhotim. It is in this way that Kusama reminds us that we are connected by something greater and that we are part of a whole. This sense of self-obliteration dissolves and accumulates; it proliferates and separates, at the same time it integrates us into the environment, in the quest to reach infinity through the repetition of forms.

In a 1967 performance during the screening of her film *Kusama's Self-Obliteration*, Yayoi Kusama used fluorescent paint and light to make visible her perception of the world which involves the repetition of elements such as dots and body parts. After using people as canvases for her paintings, the artist turns to transforming perception through immersive environments, as in *I'm Here, But Nothing*.

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ABOUT THE WORKS

Fully illuminated by black light, a common home environment is taken up by countless bright colorful dots. The furniture and objects that make up *I'm Here, But Nothing* (2000) are commonplace in a home, such as a sofa, television, table, chairs, picture frames, rugs and other decorative objects. The fluorescent dots are adhesive stickers spread all over the walls, all over the objects, on the ceiling and on the floor. Under the black light (UV-A, ultraviolet), these colored dots sparkle at the viewer's gaze, transforming the space, activating perception and, in a way, filling a void. The work can also be perceived as part of the artist's concept of self-obliteration, in the sense of the dissolution of the spectator into the environment itself – which, for some people, may bring a sense of security for being in contact with recognizable objects and furniture, while for others it may bring a feeling more related to absence, as the title of the work suggests.

Aftermath of Obliteration of Eternity (2009) is based on the principles of the artist's philosophy of self-obliteration, the desire to deny her existence by uniting with the infinite, as part of a whole. In this immersive environment, the proposal is for the spectator



I'm Here, But Nothing (2000).

Photo credit: Daniel Mansur

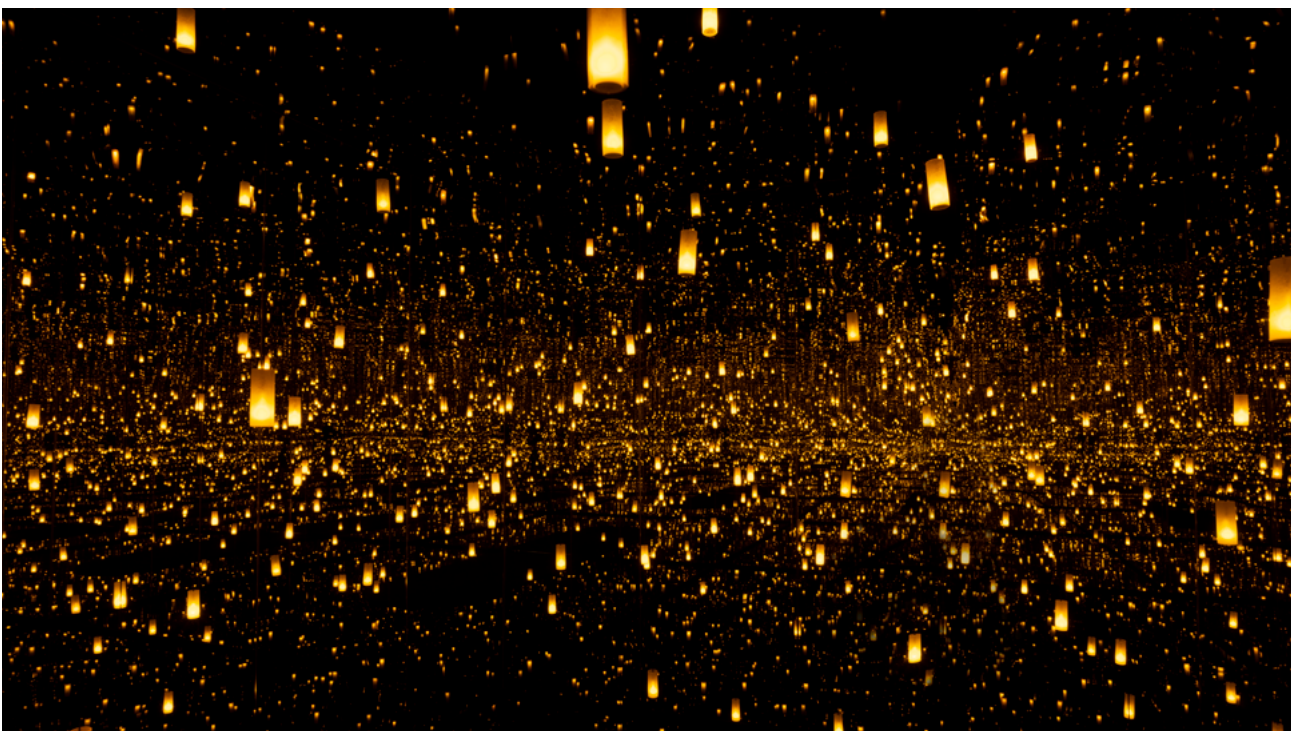
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to be transported to a universe which is completely different from the outside, a transcendental cosmos. The appearance of the work evokes a continuous mirage illuminated by lanterns, which fades as our perception moves away from reality. In Japanese tradition, this type of lighting is linked to spirituality, a connection with the ancestors.

“In both works, with distinct appearances, Yayoi Kusama bases herself on the concept of self-obliteration, which the artist has been investigating in her work over many decades. The idea is to think about the dissolution of individualism, seeking a communion with the universal, blurring the boundaries of what is artwork, space, body and landscape,” explains Inhotim curator Douglas de Freitas. “In *I’m Here, But Nothing* a recognizable domestic space is the starting point for an alteration in the perception of space through light and polka dot stickers with fluorescent ink. In *Aftermath of Obliteration of Eternity* the artist creates a space opposite to the recognizable one in the other piece. The play of mirrors and light creates a cosmos, an image of emptiness that gradually lights up and reflects itself infinitely”, concludes the curator.

Aftermath of Obliteration of Eternity
(2009). Photo credit: courtesy of Bellagio
Gallery of Fine Art in Las Vegas

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ABOUT THE ARCHITECTURAL PROJECT

For Galeria Yayoi Kusama, small areas with wooden benches were created, as an invitation to linger for those visiting the gallery or those who are just enjoying the atmosphere and the view. If viewed from above, as an intervention of color in the landscape, the project connects two moments of the existing vegetation - the spontaneous forest and the planned garden - and seems to conceal a magical world to be discovered by the people who visit the park. “Our project is synthesized in two actions on this already altered landscape: the creation of a light cover to provide shade for the entire area, and the insertion of a slim building that extends across the edge of the square with the forest, anchored on the two lateral slopes,” specify Fernando Maculan and Maria Paz.

Over the entire extension of the square and gallery, a flexible metal mesh provides support for the growth of a vegetation of Asian origin - *Congea tomentosa* - a type of vine with ample vegetation cover, with dense flowering, which usually occurs after winter. *Congea* confers the notion of time and continuous transformation to the project of Galeria Yayoi Kusama, alternating the coloring of its inflorescence in shades of white, pink, lilac and gray.

ABOUT THE LANDSCAPING PROJECT

In the planned garden of Galeria Yayoi Kusama, the reddish hue of the existing corten steel structure in the main building of the Galeria was followed by the choice of green, yellow and reddish bromeliads – many of them have natural circles on their leaves, making reference to the artist’s work. To make the wide column-free span of the gallery space stand out, low plants were chosen. The use of the *Conchocarpus macrophyllus* shrub, a species native to the Atlantic Forest, makes the unique verticality of the plants to align with the floor and the metal plates of the gallery’s cladding.

“We use many plants of the Marantaceae family, with their leaves that look like they were painted by hand, making the garden more dreamlike,” comments botanical curator Juliano Borin of Inhotim Botanical Garden. The stones used in the garden area of

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the gallery are iron ore stones in massive blocks that, according to Borin, display an identity of Inhotim and the gallery itself. In another reference to the artist's country of origin, the position of the stones points to Japan.

Yayoi Kusama already exhibits her work *Narcissus Garden* (1966/2009) at Inhotim, which makes reference to the myth of Narcissus, who is enchanted by his own image reflected in the water. *Narcissus Garden* gathers 750 stainless steel spheres on a water mirror, on the terrace of the Burle Marx Education and Culture Center, a building designed by Arquitetos Associados. This work is a version of the sculpture first presented at the 33rd Venice Biennale (1966). On that occasion, Yayoi Kusama secretly put up for sale 1,500 spheres next to the Italy pavilion with two signs that read: "Your narcissism for sale" and "Narcissus Garden, Kusama".

Galeria Yayoi Kusama is sponsored by Companhia Brasileira de Metalurgia e Mineração (CBMM) through the Federal Law of Incentive to Culture.

EXHIBITION

Galeria Yayoi Kusama

Works exhibited at Galeria Yayoi Kusama: *Aftermath of Obliteration of Eternity* (2009), mirror, wood, plastic, acrylic, LED, aluminum. ***I'm Here, But Nothing*** (2000), stickers, ultraviolet fluorescent lights, furniture, household objects, variable dimensions.

Opening date:

Sunday, July 16, 2023.

Location: Orange Path, G24, Instituto Inhotim.

Special operation:

<http://inhotim.info/yayoikusama>

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VISITING HOURS

In July - Tuesday to Friday, from 9:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.; Saturdays, Sundays and holidays, from 9:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.



ENTRADA

Admission: R\$ 50 whole (half off for students with ID, seniors over 60 years old and their partners). Children up to 5 years old do not pay admission.



LOCATION

Inhotim is located in the city of Brumadinho, 60 km from the city of Belo Horizonte, capital city of the state of Minas Gerais (a trip of approximately 1 hour and 15 minutes). Access through federal highway BR-381 at km 500 – direction Belo Horizonte/São Paulo. It is also possible to get to Inhotim through federal highway BR-040 (a trip of approximately 1 hour and 30 minutes from Belo Horizonte). Access through BR-040 - direction Belo Horizonte/Rio de Janeiro, at the Retiro do Chale exit.



TRANSPORTATION OPTIONS



INHOTIM DESIGN STORE

The Inhotim store, located at the entrance of the Institute, offers decoration items, utilitarian objects, books, toys, ceramic pieces, vases, plants and typical regional food products, in addition to the institutional line of the Park. Products are also available for purchase on the online [store](#).

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