



The Diamonstein-Spielvogel Lecture Series provides a forum for distinguished artists to discuss the genesis and evolution of their work in their own words. Dr. Barbaralee Diamonstein-Spielvogel and Ambassador Carl Spielvogel generously endowed this series to make such conversations available to the public.

National Gallery of Art

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DIAMONSTEIN-SPIELVOGEL LECTURE SERIES

LEO VILLAREAL
National Gallery of Art



Leo Villareal, *Multiverse*, 2008, light-emitting diodes (LEDs), computer, and electronic circuitry, National Gallery of Art, Gift of Victoria and Roger Sant and Sharon P. and Jay Rockefeller

Leo Villareal, artist, in conversation with Molly Donovan, associate curator, department of modern art, National Gallery of Art

May 7, 2016

noon

East Building Auditorium

National Gallery of Art

Born in 1967 in Albuquerque, New Mexico, Leo Villareal began experimenting with light, sound, and video while studying set design and sculpture at Yale University, where he received his BA. He earned his Master of Professional Studies (MPS) in the design of new media, computational media, and embedded computing from New York University's pioneering interactive telecommunications program at the Tisch School of the Arts. There he also learned the programming skills that enable him to push LED (light-emitting diode) technology far past familiar commercial applications.

Since the 1960s, a growing number of artworks have exploited light to frame and create spaces in the built environment. These include Dan Flavin's space-defining fluorescent light sculptures, James Turrell's color-saturated voids, Jenny Holzer's LED-generated texts, and Felix Gonzales-Torres's strings of lightbulbs. While Villareal's art acknowledges these forebears, his concepts relate more closely to the instructional wall drawings of Sol LeWitt and the systems-based paintings of Peter Halley.

Villareal's work is represented in the Gallery's collection by *Multiverse*, one of his largest and most complex light sculptures. It is experienced by visitors as they pass through the Concourse walkway

between the East and West Buildings. The work features approximately 41,000 computer-programmed LED nodes that run through existing channels along the 200-foot-long space. The programming both instructs the lights and allows for an element of chance, so that it is very unlikely that any pattern will repeat during a viewer's experience. Development of this project began in 2005, and installation took place between September and December 2008.

Based in New York, Villareal has been included in many solo and group exhibitions, and has made site-specific commissions throughout the world, including at P.S.1 MoMA, New York; Brooklyn Academy of Music; Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo; the Nerman Museum of Contemporary Art, Overland Park, Kansas; and the San Francisco Bay Bridge.

This lecture is free and open to the public. Seating is available on a first-come, first-seated basis. The East Building of the National Gallery of Art is located at Fourth Street and Pennsylvania Avenue NW.