

NICODIM

Robert Yarber

The Ayahuasca Drawings

Nicodim, Los Angeles

October 28 – December 4, 2021



Robert Yarber, *Mountain of Madness (It's Not Our Fault!)*, 2013

It's not a secret that Robert Yarber has always been a psychonaut. His practice embraces deeper understandings of the human condition from his own altered state, be it achieved through meditation or entheogenic substances. The paintings from the 1980s for which he is best known depict levitating (or falling) figures alone or in pairs, reflecting artificial light from cityscapes like moons mirroring the sun. They're contemplative, they're freaky, but they're a bit more cocaine and quaalude than full-blown head trip.

In 2005, Yarber boarded a boat for Iquitos, Peru, and met with a shaman for three Ayahuasca ceremonies over the course of two weeks. The decoction sent him messages, introduced him to energies and beings from other dimensions. He conversed with the cosmocreators, the magicians who constructed

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Nicodim Upstairs, Los Angeles

the universe, but also burlesque pranksters and bumbling idiots. “I saw the Virgin Mary, I saw Porky Pig,” he says. Through drawing, sketching, writing, and meditation, he attempted to decipher the meaning of it all, a blueprint for the collective consciousness, but most of all his own. He moved his studio to Kathmandu.

From his new home in Nepal, his Ayahuasca visions melded with the Hindu and Buddhist artworks, totems, and relics he saw in the temples and streets of his surrounding neighborhoods and became, for his practice, a cohesive whole. The high-contrast neons-on-black from his earlier work gave way to pastels on white cotton-rag paper—the better not to see the skin, but to see through it to the shamanic aliens, Gods and deities, sea captains, and massive (yet somehow effeminate) donges that populate the universes within our bodies. These are *The Ayahuasca Drawings*.

Robert Yarber (b. 1948, Dallas, Texas) lives and works in central Pennsylvania. Since the 1970s, Robert Yarber has produced mind-bendingly psychedelic paintings, first gaining international acclaim when his work was included in “Paradise Lost/Paradise Regained: American Visions of the New Decade,” an exhibit organized by the New Museum for display in the American Pavilion at the 41st Venice Biennale in 1984. Yarber gained further prominence with his inclusion in the 1985 Whitney Biennial, and he is credited as a major influence for the art direction of Terry Gilliam’s 1998 film *Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas*.

Yarber has exhibited nationally and internationally since the early eighties. Recent solo exhibitions include *Anamorphic! Sublime!*, Galeria Nicodim, Bucharest (2019, solo); *Return of the Repressed*, Nicodim Gallery, Los Angeles (2018, solo); *Panic Pending*, Reflex Amsterdam, Holland (2014, solo); *Calaveras Gnosticos*, Sonnabend Gallery, New York, NY (2009, solo); *Sortie: The Demonological Survey*, Kyungpook National University Art Museum, Daegu, Korea (2007, solo); and *Robert Yarber*, Sonnabend Gallery, New York, NY (1998, solo). His works can be found in the collections of Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; The PaineWebber Art Collection, New York; The Broad Museum, Los Angeles; and The Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, among others.

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Robert Yarber

° Born 1948, Dallas, TX

Lives and works between Central Pennsylvania and New York City

Education

1974 M.F.A, Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge, LA

1971 B.F.A., Cooper Union College, New York, NY

Solo Exhibitions

2019 *Anamorphic! Sublime!*, Galeria Nicodim, Bucharest, Romania

2018 *Return of the Repressed*, Nicodim Gallery, Los Angeles, CA

2014 *Panic Pending*, Reflex Amsterdam, Amsterdam, Netherlands

2009 *Calaveras Gnosticos*, Sonnabend Gallery, New York, NY

2007 *Sortie: The Demonological Survey*, Kyungpook National University Art Museum, Daegu, Korea

1999 *Modernism*, San Francisco, CA

Marella Arte Contemporanea, Sarnica, Italy

1998 Sonnabend Gallery, New York, NY

1997 Sergio Tossi Arte Contemporanea, Prato, Italy

1996 Marella Arte Contemporanea, Sarnica, Italy

1995 Sonnabend Gallery, New York, NY

Nevada Institute for Contemporary Art, Las Vegas, NV

Patricia Faure Gallery, Santa Monica, CA

1994 Galerie Lehmann, Lausanne, Switzerland

1993 Sonnabend Gallery, New York, NY

Julie Saul Gallery, New York, NY

1992 Casino de Knokke, Knokke-Heist, Belgium

Galerie Van de Weghe, Brussels, Belgium

Galleria in Arco, Torino, Italy

1991 Galerie Faust, Geneva, Switzerland

Robert Yarber: Photographs, Lieberman & Saul, New York

Robert Yarber: Artifice and Escapes, The Frank Martin Gallery, Muhlenberg College, Allentown, PA

1990 *Climax of the Commonplace*, Sonnabend Gallery, New York, NY

Galerie Langer, Fain, Paris, France

1989 Gallery Paule Anglim, San Francisco, CA

Robert Yarber Paintings: 1980-1988, Palmer Museum of Art, Penn State University, University Park,

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- PA; Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Richmond, VA: Richmond Museum of Art, Richmond, VA
- 1987 Asher/Faure Gallery, Los Angeles, CA
Greene Gallery, Coconut Grove, FL
Thomas Cohn Arte Contemporanea, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil
Sonnabend Gallery, NY
- 1985 Vollum College Center Gallery, Reed College, Portland, OR
Sonnabend Gallery, NY
- 1984 Mattingly Baker Gallery, Dallas, TX
Southwestern University, Georgetown, TX
Asher Faure Gallery, Los Angeles, CA
- 1983 Steven Lieber Gallery, San Francisco, CA
- 1981 Simon Lowinsky Gallery, Los Angeles, CA
Dominican College, San Rafael, CA
Simon Lowinsky Gallery, San Francisco, CA

Selected Group Exhibitions

- 2019 *Skin Stealers*, Nicodim Gallery, Los Angeles, CA
- 2018 *The Adderall and the Ecstasy*, Galeria Nicodim, Bucharest, Romania
- 2017 *HOMEWARD BOUND*, Nicodim Gallery, Los Angeles, CA
- 2009 *Les annees 80*, Le Magasin, Grenoble, France
- 2008 *Piot Brehmer, Robert Yarber, Samuel Freeman* Gallery, Santa Monica, CA
Digitalia, Intimacy in the Hyperreal, Deborah Colton Gallery, Houston, TX
- 2006 *The Hedonistic Imperative*, Deborah Colten Gallery, Houston, TX
- 2005 *Modern, Contemporary, and Latin American Art*, Bonham's & Butterfield's, San Francisco, CA
A Better Tomorrow, curated by Saul Ostrow, Cleveland Institute of Art, Cleveland, OH
- 2004 *Art and Illusion: Selections from the Frederick R. Weisman Art Foundation*, Frederick R. Weisman Museum of Art, Pepperdine University, Malibu, CA
25th Anniversary Exhibit, Modernism Gallery, San Francisco, CA
Dream or Nightmare: Images of Air and Space in Contemporary Art, Asheville Art Museum, Asheville, NC
URGENT!: An exhibition of contemporary art and cultural paraphernalia, Scott Pfaffman Gallery, New York, NY
- 2002 *Visions: The First Ten Years. Selections from the Galleria Valentina Moncada*, Acanto Blu, Paermo, Sicily
From Pop to Now: Selections from the Sonnabend Collection, Curated by Antonio Homem, The Tang Teaching Museum and Art Gallery, Skidmore College, Saratoga Springs, NY
Arte a Palazzo. Oraziana 2002, curated by Otilio Lotinni, Prof. Dott. Horace's Villa, Licenza, Italy

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- 1999 *View from the Edge of the World*, Marlborough Gallery, Chelsea, NY
- 1998 *Frightful Paint*, Arti et Amicitiae, Amsterdam, Netherlands
- 1997 *Sex Industry*, curated by John Yau, Stux Gallery, New York, NY
Aerial Perspectives, D.C. Moore Gallery, New York, NY
- 1996 *The Sonnabend Collection*, Deichtorhalle, Hamburg, Germany
Fifteen Artists, Patricia Faure Gallery, Santa Monica, CA
Shot – Una Visione Americana, Valentina Moncada, Rome, Italy
Epitaphs, Edward Throp Gallery, New York, NY
- 1994 *The World of Tomorrow*, Thomas Solomon's Garage, Los Angeles, CA
Love in the Ruins, Long Beach Museum of Art, Long Beach, CA
Group Show, Sonnabend Gallery, New York, NY
- 1993 *Drawings: 30th Anniversary Exhibition*, Leo Castelli Gallery, NY
Wake-up Call, Performance Space 122, New York, NY
The Fluorescent Conscience, Galerie Pfefferle, Munich, Germany
- 1992 *American Art of the 80's*, Museo d'Arte Moderna e Contemporanea di Trento e Rovereto, Trento, Italy
In The Looking Glass: Contemporary Narrative Painting, Mint Museum of Art, Charlotte, NC
Illumination, Pfizer Inc, New York, NY
Bedroom Eyes: Room with a View, Main Art Gallery, California State University, Fullerton, CA
Troubled Waters, Rockland Center for the Arts, West Nyack, NY
- 1991 *Art of the 1980s: Selections from the Collection of the Eli Broad Family Foundation*, Duke University Museum of Art, Durham, NC
Visions, Fantasies and Mind Wanderings, Lintas Worldwide, New York, NY
Contemporary Surrealism, New Jersey Center for the Visual Arts, Summit, NJ
de-persona, The Oakland Museum, Oakland, CA
Selection, FAE, Museum d'Art Contemporain, Lausanne, Switzerland
- 1990 *Art What Thou Eat: Images of Food in American Art*, Edith C. Blum Art Institute, Bard College; New York Historical Society
California A-Z And Return, The Butler Institute of American Art, Youngstown, OH
New Work by Night, Bruce Helinder Gallery, NY
Mystery + Dreams, Dorsky Gallery, NY
In the Realm of the Plausible, curated by J. Yau, Shea and Becker Gallery, New York, NY
Northwest by Southwest, Palm Springs Desert Museum, Palm Springs, CA; Yellowstone Art Center, Billings, MO; Western Gallery, Western Washington University, Bellingham, WA; Sarah Campbell Blaffer Gallery, University of Houston, Houston, TX
- 1989 *Horn of Plenty*, Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam, Holland
Painting Beyond the Death of Painting, Curated by Donald Kuspit, Kuznetsky Most Exhibition Hall, Moscow, USSR
Frederick Wiseman Collection, Neuberger Museum, Purchase, NY
New Work By Gallery Artists, Sonnabend Gallery, New York, NY

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Unstable Universe, Asher/Faure Gallery, Los Angeles, CA

Social Fictions, Torn Tavelli Gallery, Aspen, CO

- 1988 *Recent American Pastels*, Christian A. Johnson Memorial Gallery, Middlebury College, Middlebury, VT
Collection Sonnabend, Centro de Arte Reina Sofia, Madrid CAPC, Musee d'Art Contemporain, Bordeaux, France; Hamburger Bahnhof Berlin, West Germany; Galleria Nazionale D'Arte Moderna, Roma; Museo d'Arte Moderna e Contemporanea, Trento, Musee Rath, Geneva; Sezon Museum of ART, Tokyo; The Miyagi Museum of Art, Sendai, Japan; The Fukuyama Museum of Art, Hiroshima, Japan; The National Museum Modern Art, Kyoto, Japan

Symbolism-Force and Spirit, Dorsky Gallery, New York, NY

Narrative Art, Mark Twain Gallery, St. Louis, MO

- 1987 *Lust one of the seven deadlies*, Curated by Philip Tsiaras, M-13 Gallery, New York
Selections from the Frederick R. Weisman Collection, The Baltimore Museum of Art, Baltimore, MD; Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts, Philadelphia, PA; Walker Arts Center, Minneapolis, MN; Birmingham Museum of Art, AL; Norton Gallery and School of Art, West Palm Beach, FL; Colorado Springs Fine Arts Center, CO

Movietone Muse, One Penn Plaxa, New York

Panoramas & Prospects, Holly Solomon Gallery, New York, NY

Private Expressions: Personal Experiences, Stamford Museum & Nature Center, Stamford, CT

- 1986 *Selections from the Frederick Weisman Collection*, Centre National d'Art Contemporain, Paris, France
Boston Collects: Contemporary Painting and Sculpture, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, MA
Painting and Sculpture Today, Indianapolis Museum of Art, Indianapolis, IN
Five Painters: New York, A New Generation, Segal, Steinberg Gallery, Montreal, Canada
Il Progetto Domestico, Triennale di Milano, Milano, Italy

The Texas Transfer, The Johnson Gallery, University of New Mexico, Las Lornas, NM

- 1985 *Biennial Exhibition 1985*, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, NY

Texas Current Part, San Antonio Art Institute, San Antonio, TX

- 1984 *Paradise Lost/Paradise Regained: American Visions of the New Decade*, The 41st Venice Biennale, United States Pavilion, Venice, Italy

The Human Condition: SFMMA Biennial III, San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, San Francisco, CA

What's Happening: Contemporary Art From California, Oregon and Washington, Alternative Museum, New York, NY

Outside New York, The New Museum of Contemporary Art, New York, NY

Strange, Henry Art Gallery, University of Washington, Seattle, WA

Work From the Lower East Side, Larry Gagosian Gallery, Los Angeles, CA

The New Portrait, PS1, Long Island City, NY

Current Expressions, Fuller Goldeen Gallery, San Francisco, CA

Modern Romances, Reece Bullen Gallery, Humboldt State University, Arcata, CA & San José Institute of Contemporary Art, San José, CA

Romantic Painting, Tracey Garet Gallery, New York, NY

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- Crime and Punishment*, Triton Museum of Art, Santa Clara, CA
- 1983 *Robert Yarber, Sarah Canright and Peter Saul*, Patrick Gallery, Austin, Texas
Ceci Nest Pas Le Surrealism: California: Idioms of Sarrealism, Fisher Gallery, University of Southern California, Los Angeles, CA
The Impolite Figure, Southern Exposure Gallery, San Francisco, CA
Robert Yarber and Patrick Morrison, San Francisco Art Institute, San Francisco, CA
Bodies and Souls, Marisa Del Re Gallery, New York, NY
Attention: California Artists, The Oakland Museum, Oakland, CA
- 1982 *New Bay Area Painting and Sculpture*, San Francisco Art Institute Galleries, San Francisco, CA
California Video, Anthology Film Archives, New York, NY
East Coast-West Coast, Fashion Moda, Bronx, NY
Emerging Northern California Artists, Orange County Center for Contemporary Arts, Santa Ana, CA
- 1981 *Humor in Art*, Los Angeles Institute of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, California
Locations, California State University, San Bernardino, CA
Fashion Moda, Galeria de la Raza, San Francisco, CA
- 1980 *John Alberts and Bob Yarber: Painting and Drawing*, Blackfish Gallery, Portland, OR
- 1979 *Bay Area Artist Exhibition and Sale*, The Oakland Museum, Oakland, CA
- 1971 *Painterly Realism*, Smith College Museum of Art, Northampton, MA
- 1969 Bowery Gallery, New York, NY
- 1967 *Texas Annual: Texas Painting and Sculpture Exhibition*, (juried by Richard Diebenkorn), Dallas Museum, Dallas, TX

Selected Public and Private Collections

AXA Equitable Life Inc., New York, New York
Bank of America, San Francisco, California
Birmingham Museum of Art, Birmingham, Alabama
Blanton Museum of Art, University of Texas at Austin, Austin, Texas
Boston Fine Arts Museum, Boston, Massachusetts
The Eli and Edythe Broad Foundation, Los Angeles, California
Frito-Lay, Dallas, Texas
Fredric R. Wiseman Art Foundation, Los Angeles, California
Museum Ludwig, Cologne, Germany
Oakland Museum of California, Oakland, California
The Paine-Webber Art Collection, New York, New York
Southwestern Bell, Dallas, Texas
Yokohama Museum of Art, Yokohama, Japan
Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, New York