

# **Yayoi Kusama**

**Small Pumpkin Paintings**

# Omer Tiroche Gallery

Essays by E.S. Jones



# Foreword

Yayoi Kusama is, without doubt, one of the greatest living artists still working today. She's often spoken about within the context of a female artist (greatest female artist, highest price for the living female artist, etc.), but pigeonholing her into this separate category from her male counterparts detracts from her genius.

A prolific and relentless creator, as an octogenarian she continues to make work that both satisfies collectors' demands and inspires them to want what they didn't think they wanted. Leaving no medium untouched, Kusama has worked in acrylic, oil, pencil, fibreglass, ceramic, collage, mosaic, steel, bronze, screenprint, fabric, plastic, and more.

Her hallucinations and mental illness are clearly very significant factors within the broader discourse of her work, but I won't talk about them here because they'll be discussed in greater length further on in this catalogue. Instead I'll recount two stories that Kusama had chronicled about her time in America that particularly resonated with me, not for any spiritual reason, just because I found them funny and interesting. The first is about her move to the US in 1957, where she initially arrived in Seattle and settled in New York City the following year. In her first solo exhibition she showed her works on paper - predominantly in gouache - that she brought over with her

from Japan in her suitcase (oh, to the days before User and Bond fees!). However before her departure with her suitcase filled with painted paper, she had burned a large portion of the works that she had made in Japan, only bringing over to the US a selection of the work that she had made since 1952.

The second story that I liked is one to do with her love affair with fellow artist Joseph Cornell, who was 26 years her senior. He will also be spoken about in depth later in the catalogue, but I wanted to highlight one story in particular. Although their love affair was completely platonic (Kusama had anxieties and a fear sex, and Cornell shared her aversion) the two were infatuated with one another. Cornell would write her at least ten love letters and poems every day, and would telephone her several times as well. The story that I always find amusing is that on occasion they would be speaking on the phone and she would have to leave but he, not wanting to end the conversation, would just keep speaking. Eventually she would just leave the phone off the hook and leave to go about her daily plans, only to return home and find him still speaking or just waiting quietly on the other end of the phone.

I decided to mount concurrent presentations of two completely different bodies of her work, but both equally rooted in autobiographical influences. These shows come

at a time when consumption of Kusama's work is at an all-time high, as collectors and museums alike are scrambling to acquire new and historical works, and her own museum, which opened in Tokyo in October 2017, is still so oversubscribed that visitors must buy 90 minute timed slots online in advance.

The first of the two exhibitions, which will be shown in our Mayfair gallery, will present a selection of pumpkin paintings that she painted in tiny formats. Equally playful as they are autobiographically relevant, one can't help but fall in love with Kusama's pumpkins. Growing up in rural Japan, her family were in the wholesale business and mainly dealt in – you guessed it – pumpkins! As such, when Japan became involved in the Second World War and food supplies became more scarce, the Kusamas would end up living off pumpkin based meals almost exclusively. Although she began depicting pumpkins as early as the 1940s, this series of pumpkin paintings on small canvases were only painted between 1989 and 2003. The image of the pumpkin has become practically synonymous with Kusama, but very few of us actually take the time to properly examine how these marvellous paintings are composed. Each painting is made up of polka dots ranging from 1 centimetre to 1 millimetre in diameter, and it is the arrangement of these dots that give the illusion of each pumpkin's form and volume; a trompe l'œil that would impress even Vasarely. Superimposed on her ubiquitous Infinity Net background, these tiny paintings are charged with her signature stylistic tools while simultaneously sharing with us a very personal memory from her past life.

The second exhibition will be shown as part of The Armory Show in New York, 7-11th March 2018, where we will show works from a small series of collages that she made between 1980-81, a few years after returning to Japan and institutionalising herself. The works consist of a central photograph collaged onto the centre of a coloured sheet of card, with glittery polka dots and a network of infinity nets drawn around the photograph like a webbed halo. The photographs were given to her in a shoe box by Cornell upon his death, all of which relate to nature and natural history. He would cut clippings from National Geographic and other such magazines, mostly of birds and insects, and keep them in boxes in his home. The strong connection to nature and to birds in particular is the main reason why these collages are such beautifully intimate homages to her dearest companion.

A superstar artist like Dali and Warhol before her, Kusama has collaborated with Louis Vuitton, Lancôme, and guest styled George Clooney's shoot for W Magazine. She advertises her own merchandise through her website and the gift shop of her aforementioned museum. All of this, coupled with her brightly coloured aesthetic and highly Instagrammable artworks, have made Kusama a global sensation.

**Omer Tiroche**  
February 2018





# Pumpkins & Polka-Dots

*“I was enchanted by their charming and winsome form. What appealed to me most was the pumpkin’s generous unpretentiousness. That and its solid spiritual base.”*

Pumpkins are amongst Yayoi Kusama’s best loved and most important motifs; the visual embodiment of her childhood as well as her present psychological state. She describes these paintings as a form of self-portraiture, magnifying mirrors in which to ‘confront the spirit of the pumpkin, forgetting everything else and concentrating [the] mind entirely on the form’. From an early age, she adopted the pumpkin as a personal metaphor, admiring its earthy, honest and humorous form.

Her nightmarish hallucinations of the world around her have been well-documented – having suffered an abusive mother and often absent father, Kusama writes that she became tormented by ferocious flowers that threatened obliteration – yet she fondly recalls one pumpkin that ‘immediately began speaking to (her) in a most animated manner’ when she was just a little girl.



Born on the 22nd March, 1929, the artist was raised in Matsumoto City, Nagano. Hemmed in by mountains, the Nagano area is known by the Japanese for its rural beauty and conservative ideals. Although the Kusama family entered a period of hardship during the years of World War II, they were in the wholesaling business and not affected by the food shortages, their main supply being the pumpkins that would later feature so prominently in the artist's work.

Fearing the violence of her mother and longing for her absent father, Kusama felt isolated from the world, experiencing a sequence of severe hallucinations. She describes watching a floral tablecloth mutate, swarming over the entire room from wall to ceiling, smothering her body and all surroundings with scarlet petals. The sense of overwhelming claustrophobia both frightened and fascinated the young artist, who started to develop an obsession with the idea of self-obliteration. At the age of 10, she made a drawing of her mother, peppering the surface of the paper with polka dots until the face and background receded into obscurity. She started to paint and draw the contents of her psyche, using art as a personal form of therapy.



YAYOI KUSAMA, UNTITLED, 1939

*“Nature, the universe, mankind, blood, flowers and all sorts of things and objects have been carving deep impressions in my sight, my hearing, and deep in my mind in magical, frightening or mystical ways ever since I could remember.”*



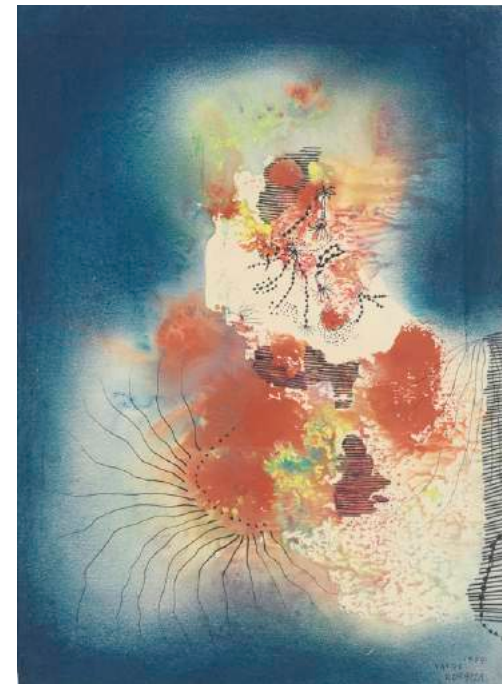
YAYOI KUSAMA, LINGERING DREAM, 1949

Triggered by these alarming visions and a hostile family environment, the repetition of spots or nets surfaces often in Kusama's art, particularly in her pumpkin paintings. She has said that a simple polka dot can be representative of one single particle, and at the same time take the shape of an entire planet or star. Now present across much of her oeuvre, these patterns have a deep-rooted symbolism for the artist, representative of a cancellation of the self and a connection to infinity.

Yayoi Kusama remembers her mother as an aggressive, driven woman who wanted her to marry into money. Distrusting her daughter's passionate interest in art, she would often creep up behind whilst Kusama was drawing in order to snatch the picture out from her hands. Even today, the artist works at break-neck speed, perhaps out of an anxiety to complete each composition before it is destroyed.

At the end of the war, and against her mother's strong wishes, Kusama decided she wanted to become an artist. In 1948, she enrolled in the Kyoto School of Arts and Crafts where she encountered Nihonga (Japanese) and Yoga (Western) styles of painting. She experimented with her first depictions of pumpkins during this time, and although she quickly left these schools of painting behind in pursuit of the avant-garde, the image of a pumpkin remained with her long afterwards.

After suffering severe distortions of reality, Kusama started a course of treatment, describing this as her 'era of mental breakdown'. Encouraged by her doctor to express her anxiety through art, her works became smaller, ominous, rendered in delicate inks or gouache on paper. She set out to illustrate the floating hallucinations that were plaguing her daily, creating thousands of pieces in just a couple of years. Even in these ethereal papers, the seeds of the artist's organic language are present; the lines are intricately drawn, the spaces are swimming with translucent webs and dividing cells.



YAYOI KUSAMA, THE CASTLE, 1954  
GOUACHE AND INK ON PAPER

*“I don't consider myself an artist; I am pursuing art in order to correct the disability which began in my childhood”*

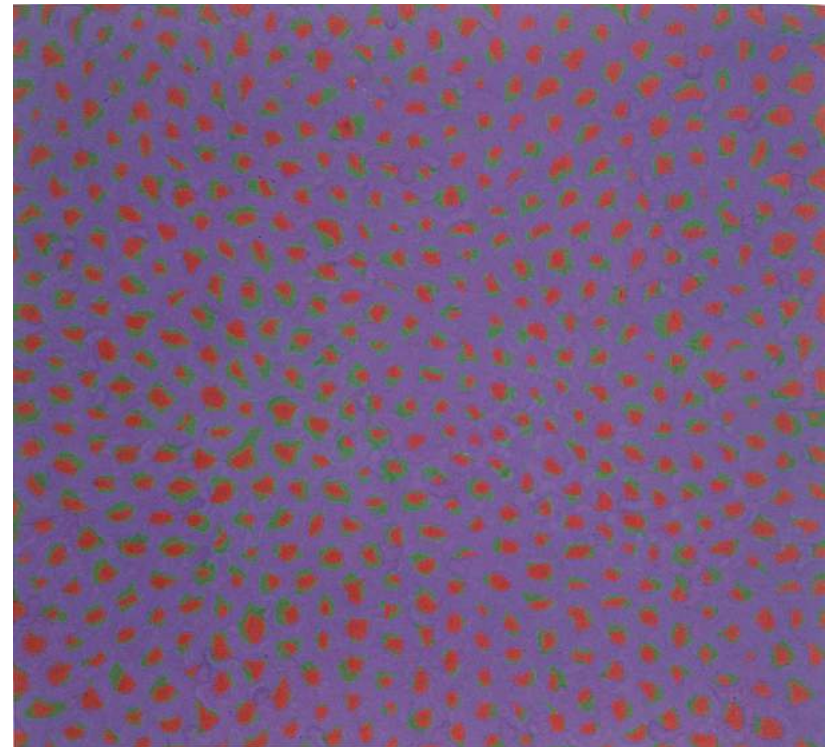


KUSAMA IN HER ROOM IN MATSUMONO, 1957

Held in her hometown of Matsumoto in 1954, Kusama's first solo exhibition showed many of these abstract paintings and works on paper. Foreshadowing the concept of her Infinity Net and Pumpkin paintings in their obsessive accumulation, these haunting works were reminiscent of the double exposure of spirit-photography. Although the show was well received, Kusama's ambition was already growing, and she now firmly set her sights on global domination.

Identifying with a mystical Georgia O'Keefe painting she had seen in a publication, Kusama looked up the artist's address and wrote to ask how to find success in New York. O'Keefe's reply was to 'take your pictures under your arm and show them to anyone you think may be interested...' This would be the first of their written correspondences which would last for a few years afterwards, and would eventually become the catalyst for her move to Seattle at the age of 28 in 1957.

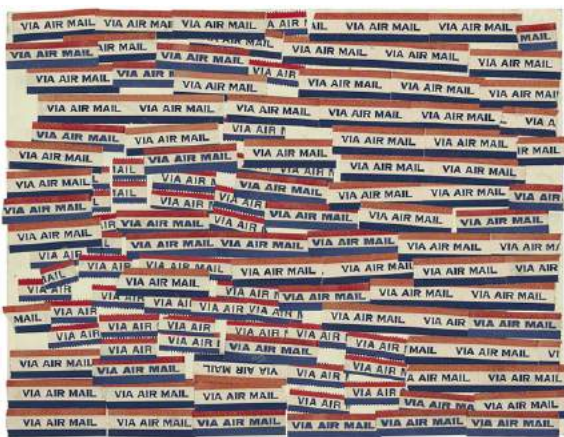
Furious with her mother, Kusama destroyed many of her half-finished paintings on a riverbank before she left Japan for America.



YAYOI KUSAMA, AN ISLAND (13), 1955  
GOUACHE ON PAPER

She saved around two thousand completed works, later commenting that these poetic images of biomorphic forms reflected the 'great depth of (her) inner heart.' These atmospheric compositions reveal traces of the dots and nets she would eventually become recognised for.

*“I woke one morning to find the nets I had painted the previous day stuck to the windows. Marvelling at this, I went to touch them, and they crawled on and into the skin of my hands... I would cover a canvas with nets, then continue painting them on the table, on the floor, and finally on my own body. As I repeated this process over and over again, the nets began to expand to infinity. I forgot about myself as they enveloped me, clinging to my arms and legs and clothes and filling the entire room.”*



YAYOI KUSAMA, AIRMAIL-ACCUMULATION, 1964

Relocating to New York in the late 50's, the artist created a new series of monochromatic minimalist paintings. Made up of small arcs of paint on a neutral ground, these vast canvases were named the Interminable or Infinity Nets. Working day and night, Kusama tirelessly painted her own boredom, working so many hours that the nets seemed to crawl off the canvas, consuming her fully. These dizzying apparitions, combined with the lack of food and warmth in her New York apartment, only compelled the artist to work herself harder, often ending up in hospital from overwork. The Nets were exhibited at the esteemed artist-run Brata Gallery in 1959 and received rave reviews; Donald Judd purchased a painting, and the two became friends.

In 1962, Kusama's experimentation with unconventional materials led her into the three-dimensions of collage, relief and soft sculpture. Although this was a major stylistic departure from the flat planes of the Infinity Nets, a neurotic fixation with the single image remained. The nets had escaped the confines of the canvas and, just as she had envisioned, began to spread over everyday objects in multiplications of airmail stickers, sewn-up mattress stuffing and endlessly gridded egg cartons.

The artist's obsession with repetition became an attempt to control her fears. She later explained that the "same things piled one on top of another creates an expanding world that reaches out to the edges of the universe... This effect of continual repetition calls out to the human senses and in return, deep inside of our hearts, we yearn for true amazement."



THE ARTIST IN HER NEW YORK STUDIO, C.1958



Kusama's first Accumulations were exhibited alongside luminaries such as Claes Oldenburg and Andy Warhol, and she socialised with members of Les Nouveaux Réalistes. She became friends with Arman and was particularly interested in the techniques of Christo and Niki de Saint-Phalle. It was during this time that she began an intense yet platonic relationship with fellow artist Joseph Cornell.

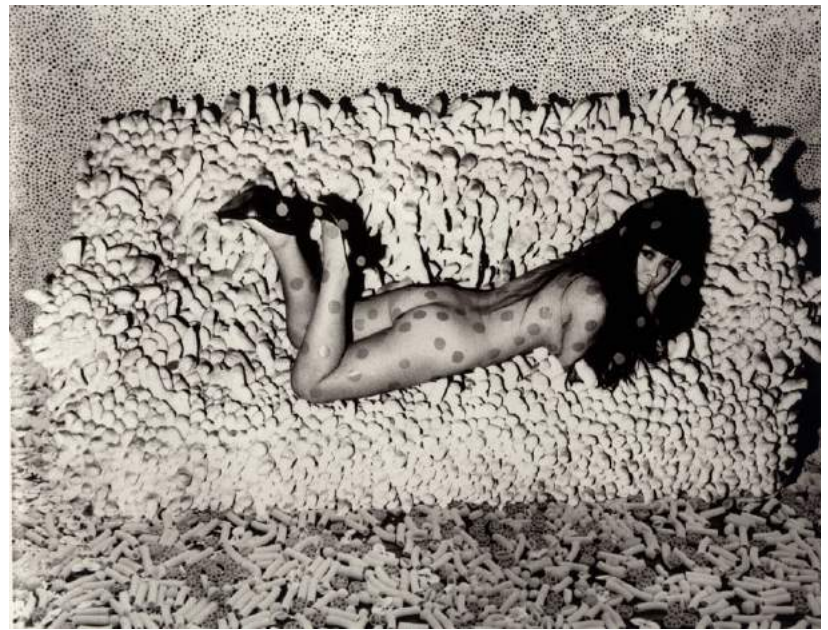
The desire to replicate a sense of eternity, coupled with the limitations of a gallery space, still frustrated Kusama; however, in the mid-60's she found a breakthrough by using mirrored walls to fragment the subject into an endlessly shapeshifting world. Within the context of the mirrored room, the presence of the spectator began to take on a much more significant role, an idea that Kusama developed further during the Venice Biennale with her Narcissus Garden installation. Covering the lawn outside the main pavilion with plastic silver orbs, the passers-by and surroundings appeared individually distorted by the reflections. Stating that she was selling off the public's own vanity, Kusama offered the spheres up for 1200 lira each - until the authorities put a stop her antics.

Afterwards, she went on to hold various happenings that explored obliteration of the self and environment, painting the naked bodies of volunteers with her trademark spots. She has described earth as 'only one polka dot among a million stars in the cosmos. Polka dots are a way to infinity. When we obliterate nature and our bodies with polka dots, we become



KUSAMA'S NARCISSUS GARDEN, 1966, VENICE BIENNALE

part of the unity of our environment.' Nicknamed the 'polka-dot princess' by the American press, news of these sensational events was not well-received by her family or home-town.





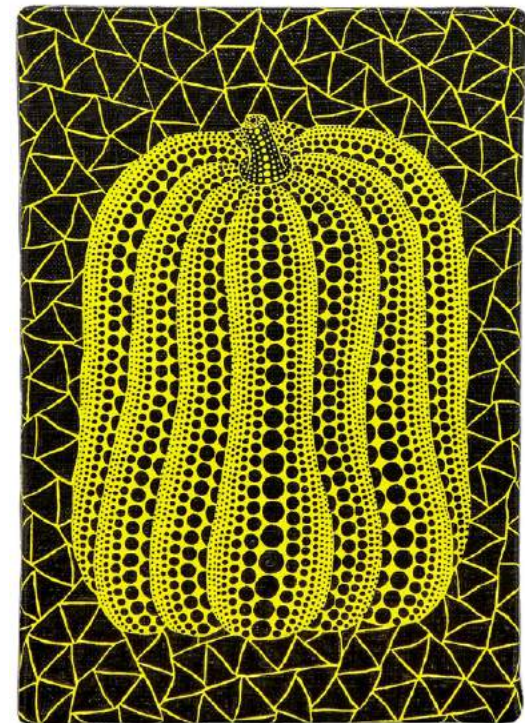
*“Artists do not usually express their own psychological complexes directly, but I use my complexes and fears as subjects...I make them and make them and then keep on making them, until I bury myself in the process. I call this ‘obliteration.’”*

Despite the controversy, Kusama was not fazed, visiting Japan for three months to host more happenings, and making several appearances on television. On her return to New York, she set out to document her experiences so far as an artist, but suffered a set-back upon news of Cornell's death in 1972. During the difficult years that also included the death of her father, Kusama focused on producing Cornell-esque collages and poetry. Although she received treatment, her condition worsened and she admitted herself to the psychiatric hospital in Tokyo, 1977, where she still lives and works today.

In 1982, Fuji Television Gallery in Tokyo held a solo exhibition of her work, bringing Kusama back into the public eye. Several other exhibitions followed the death of her mother, and these were pieces that emerged from melancholy with an exuberance that heralded the bold eccentricity for which she is now admired.

Returning to painting, Kusama re-adopted the image of the Japanese Kabocha squash that had once spoken to her in a childhood vision. Combining the nets and the dots of her artistic vocabulary, she began creating striking two-colour canvases in the late 80's. In the pumpkin paintings, Kusama's focus is on a bold contrast of black spots against a single colour, varying the size of each painted dot to give a sense of perspective. The abstract backgrounds sink the viewer deep into a netted

plane; simultaneously the off-kilter form of the pumpkin seems to leap beyond the confines of the canvas. The combination of an obsessive patterning alongside the uncanny form of the organic subject is a perfect distillation of the artist's struggle between reality and illusion, a return full-circle to her early surreal encounters, bringing us back to the very root of her creative drive.



YAYOI KUSAMA, PUMPKIN (XZA), 2003

The iconic motif has developed significantly since the late 80's. Painted in acrylic on canvas, sculpted in aluminium, bronze, ceramic, fibreglass, steel, or glittering mosaic, it has become an integral part of the artist's prolific output. Ultimately, Kusama herself has metamorphosed into this pumpkin form: regularly photographed alongside her creations in the billowing lines of bright polka-dot dresses, she wears her hair in a red shell wig and bears a larger than life appearance.

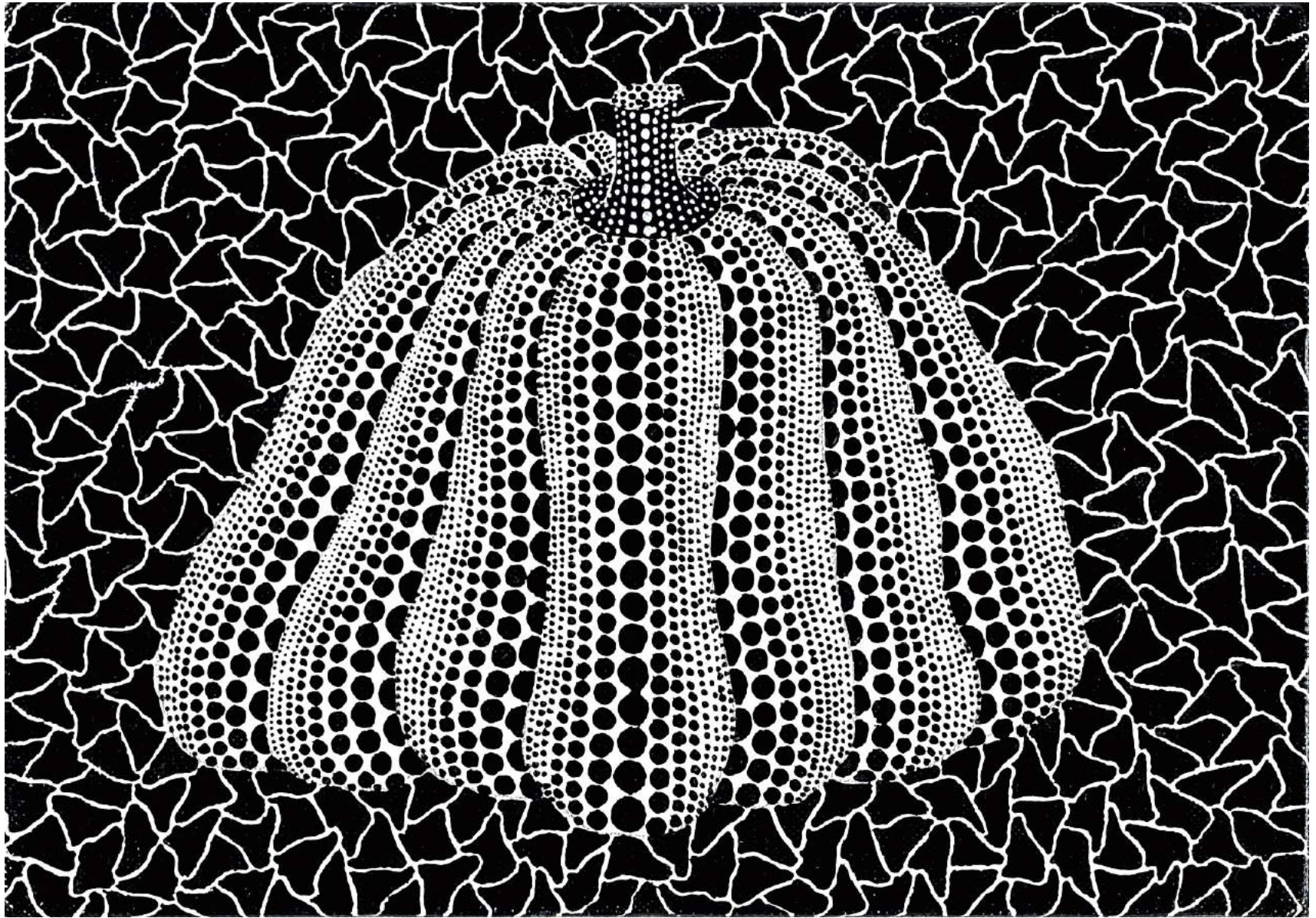
If a single image could fully embody the artist, it would be her painted pumpkin: a positive, fertile, ordinary depiction of nature, framed by the enigma of eternity. The flatness of an Infinity Net background, combined with the polka-dot optical illusion, perfectly presents a conflicted self-portrait. In the push and pull between desire and escape, Yayoi Kusama is simultaneously imprisoned by reality and locked out of it.



YAYOI KUSAMA, PUMPKIN AT NAOSHIMA ISLAND'S BENESSE ART SITE

# Plates

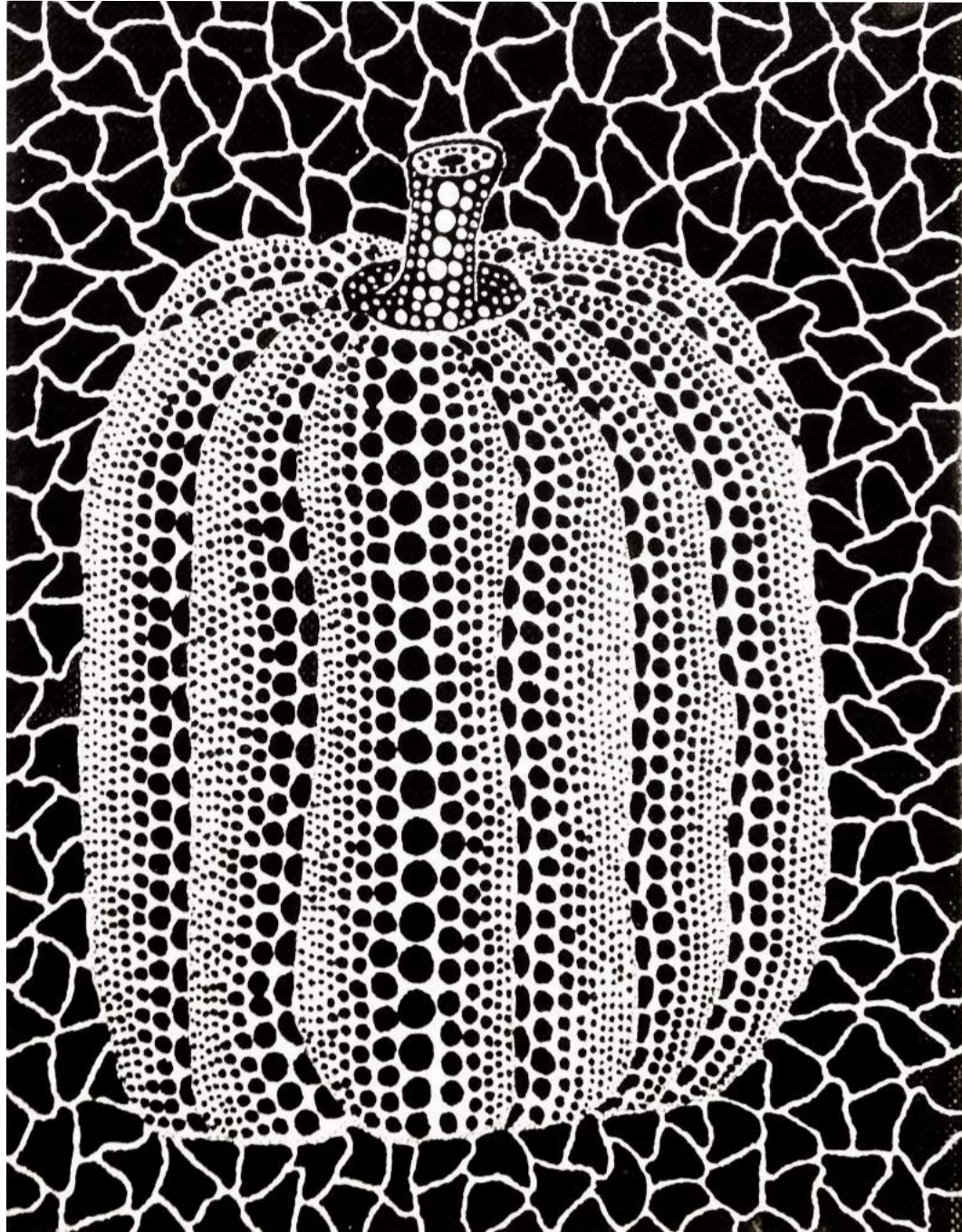
Yayoi Kusama, Pumpkin, 1991, acrylic on canvas, 15.5 by 22.5 cm.



Yayoi Kusama, *Pumpkin*, 1991, acrylic on canvas, 14 by 18 cm.



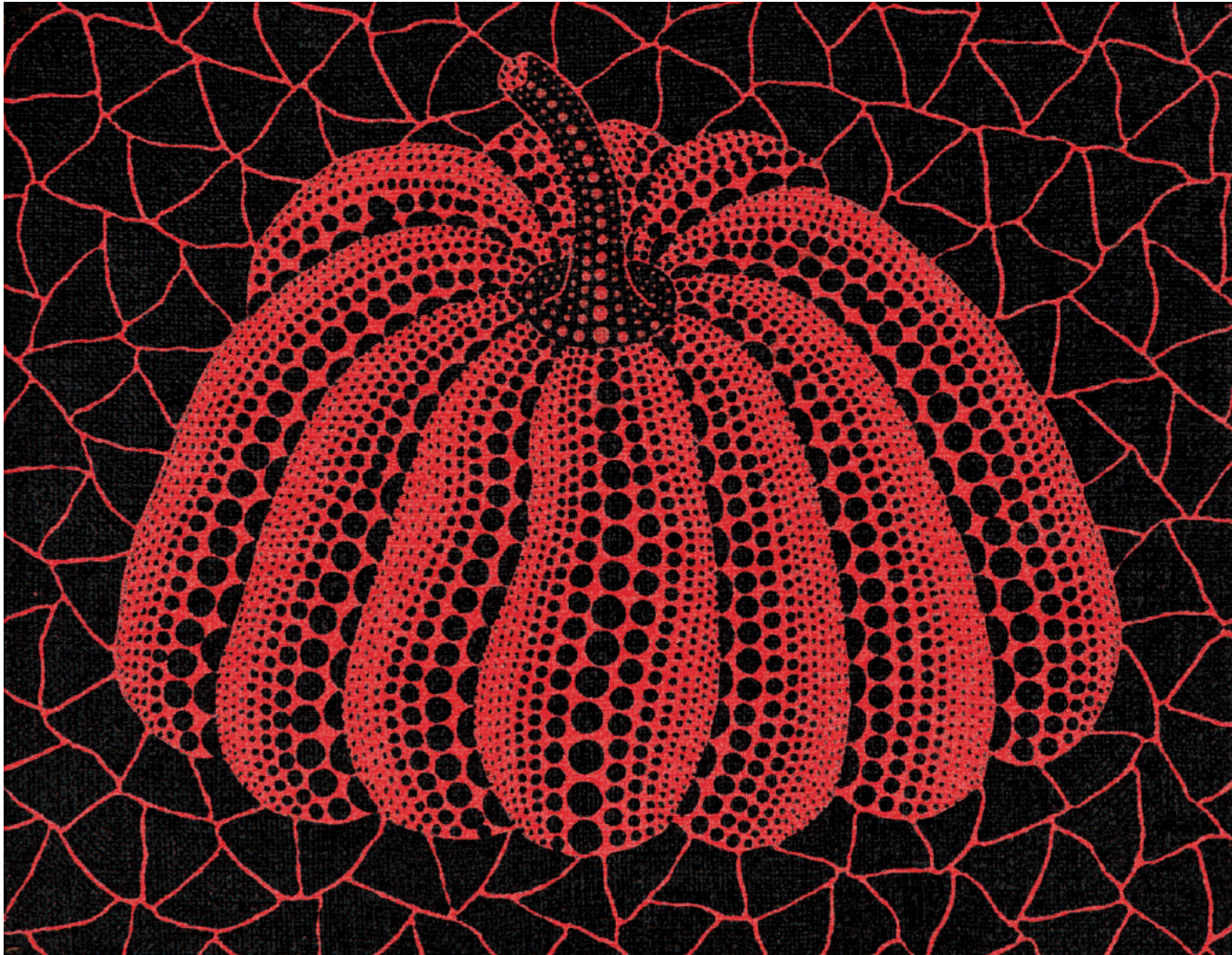
Yayoi Kusama, *Pumpkin*, 1991, acrylic on canvas, 18 by 14 cm.



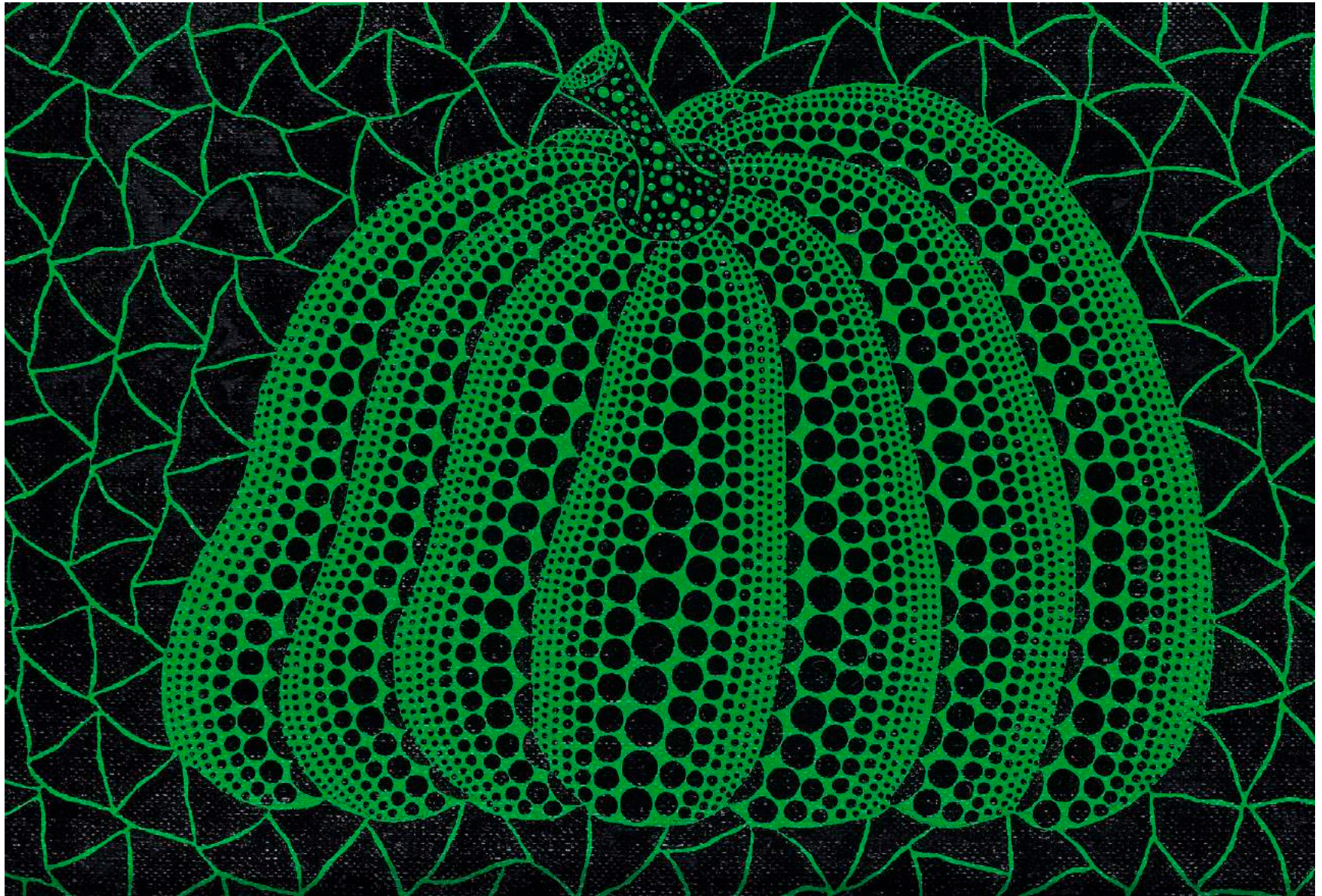
Yayoi Kusama, *Pumpkin*, 1995, acrylic on canvas, 15.8 by 22.7 cm.



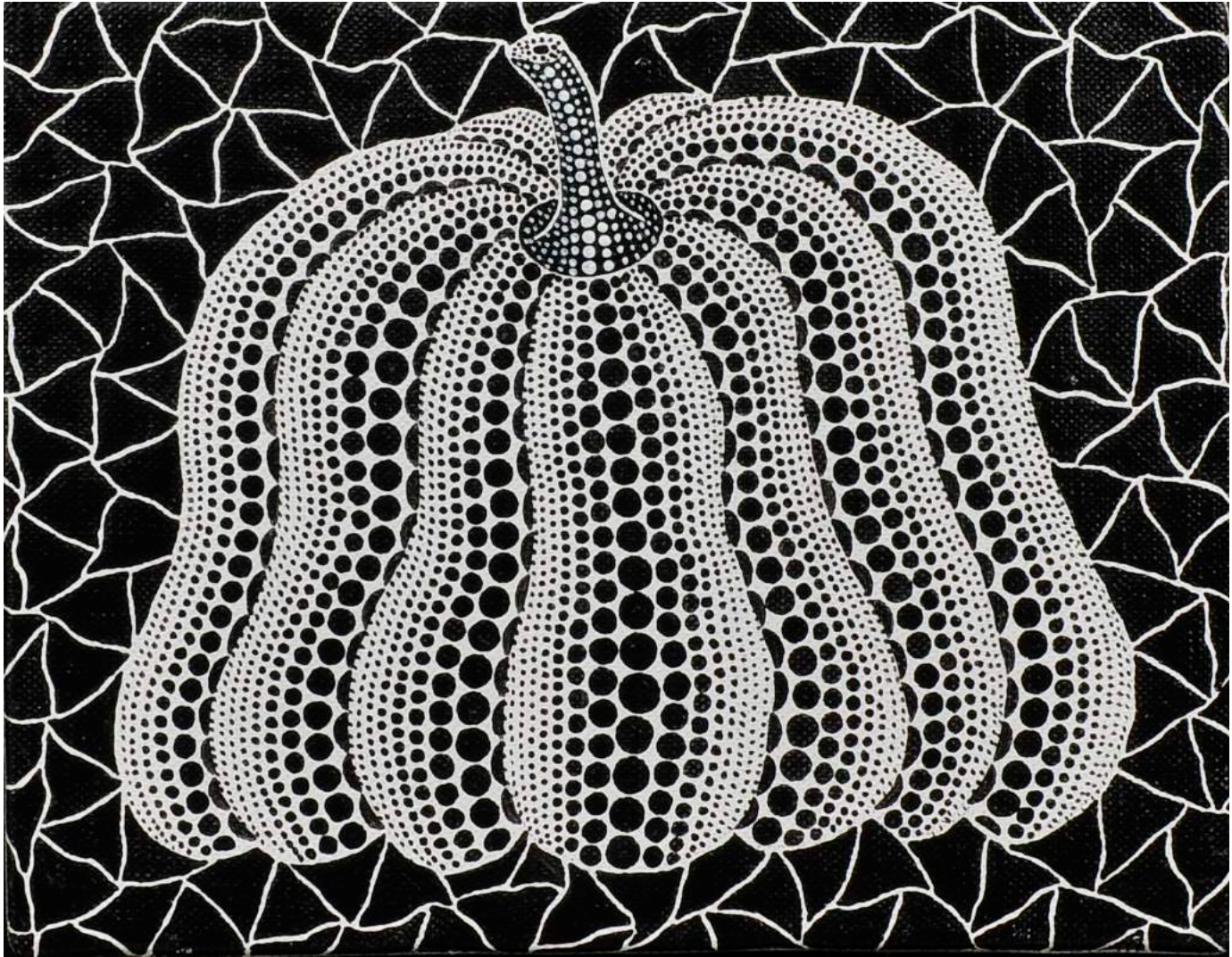
Yayoi Kusama, *Pumpkin*, 1996, acrylic on canvas 14.2 by 18 cm.



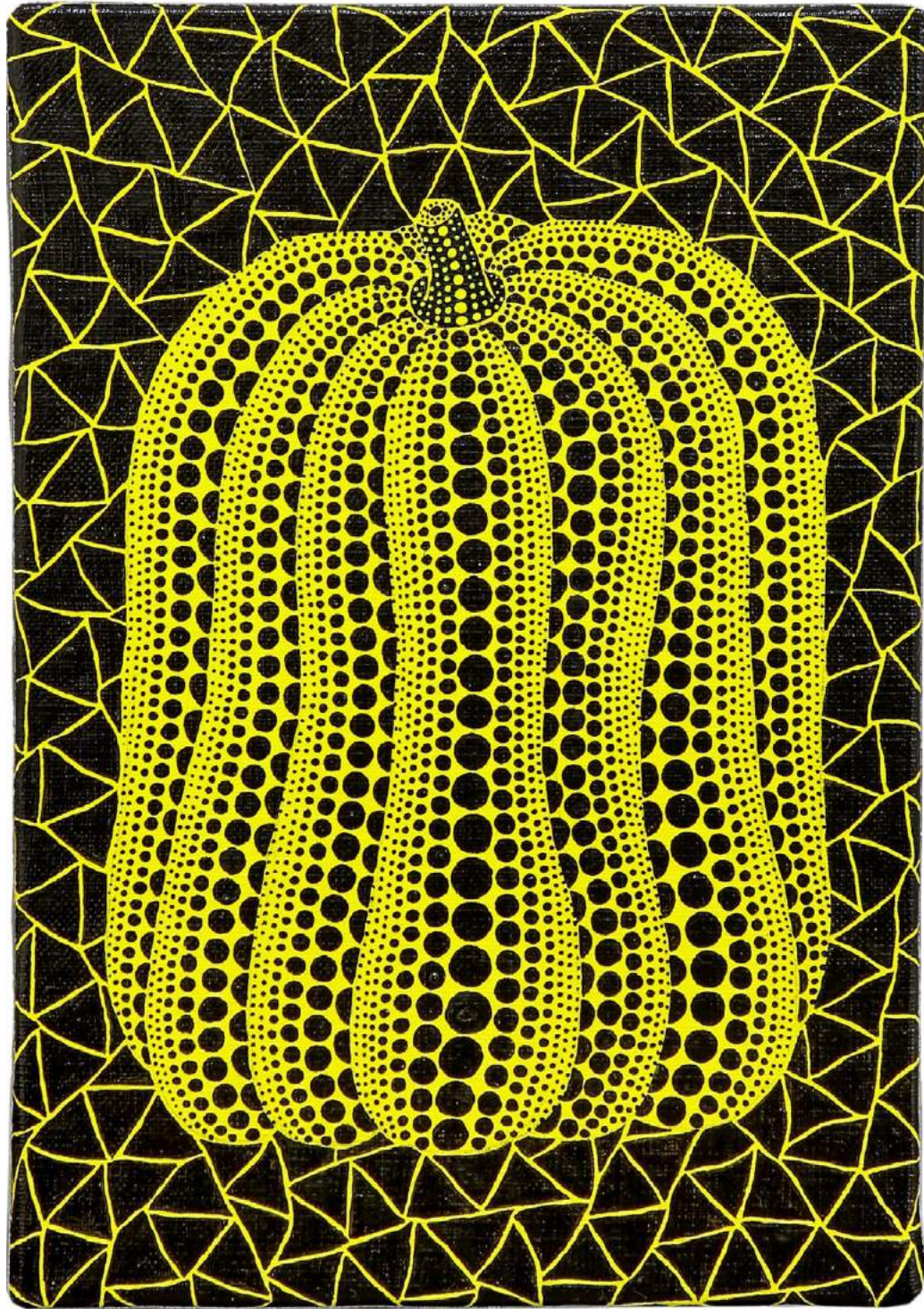
Yayoi Kusama, *Pumpkin*, 2000, acrylic on canvas 15.8 by 22.7 cm.



Yayoi Kusama, *Pumpkin (OQR)*, 2000, acrylic on canvas 14 by 18 cm.



Yayoi Kusama, *Pumpkin (XZA)*, 2003, acrylic on canvas 22.7 by 15.8 cm.



# Omer Tiroche Gallery



# Strange Birds

As an artist celebrated for her exuberant use of colour and provocative exhibitionism, Yayoi Kusama's more subtle collage work is far lesser known. Created after her return to Japan, these lyrical works illustrate a significant but short-lived chapter in the artist's life, incorporating subtle traces of her ubiquitous polka-dots and Infinity Net motifs that were prevalent in her work during the 1950s and 60s.

Before he died, the artist Joseph Cornell had given Kusama a box filled with his own collage materials. Carrying them back to Japan – as she had once carried her own works on paper to New York – she began assembling an intimate tribute to her dearest friend. Reminiscent of her early works on paper, these pieces hold darker, mysterious creatures; they are scattered with underwater bubbles and latticed with delicate cross-hatching. Eerie, animalic objects float on the surface of small enclosed spaces, like things found in rock pools, or cells observed through a microscope.

In stark contrast to her wild New York happenings and controversial phallic sculptures, this period seems sobering,

a sombre reflection on grief. Like holding up a negative to the light, the collages act as a memento mori, providing a time capsule for their relationship. They attempt to examine the transient nature of life and recognise the inevitability of death.

Kusama has described herself as an Alice-in-Wonderland type figure, part of a world that madly shrinks into a peep show, or amplifies itself to cabaret proportions. Each phase of her creativity over the past few decades has reflected her projected persona in some way, inextricably linked to her physical appearance and psyche. There have been representations of all-encompassing apparitions on paper, live performances of polka-dot mirages on bare skin, the fear and fascination of macaroni and sex transformed into unwearable clothes and uncomfortable furniture. These wraith-like collages may appear at odds with the rest of her body of work, yet they remain portholes into another important period of the artist's life.

Yayoi Kusama first met Joseph Cornell in 1962 through an art dealer. Desperate to buy from Cornell one of his famously exclusive boxes, the dealer had invited Kusama to the meeting, confident that the older artist would be charmed by the young Japanese beauty. In her silver kimono, Kusama had such an impact on the reclusive Cornell that he became infatuated, immediately attempting to pin her down like another one of his butterfly or bird clippings that he had collected. He began bombarding her with endless letters and poetry, showering her with compliments, constantly calling her on the phone.

ABRQUIN, N.M.  
12/4/53  
Dear Yayoi Kusama:  
Your two letters came to me and your watercolors also came. They are interesting but I live in the country and the Art World is in the city. I have spent many years in the cities — most of the time it was New York — and I knew the Art World very well. My husband died in 46. After I had made order in his affairs I came to the country. That was in 1950. In 5 years there are many changes in a city like New York and I now feel that I don't know the Art World as it is today. I go back every year for a month or so — some times both spring and fall — for business that I must attend to. This fall I do not have to go — and I am very glad. Would you like me to send your watercolors to some dealer who might be interested? Do you wish to sell them — and at what price?



**FLY BACK TO ME  
SPRING FLOWER  
AND I SHALL TIE  
A STRING TO YOU  
LIKE THIS BUTTERFLY**

**I TASTE SOME OF  
THE DRINK IN YOUR  
GLASS THAT YOU LEAVE  
I DRINK TO YAYOI  
NOW—  
I THINK OF MY PRINCESS.**

AN ARTWORK GIFTED BY CORNELL TO KUSAMA, CONTAINING ONE OF THE HUNDREDS OF POEMS HE WROTE HER:



JOSEPH CORNELL, PORTRAIT OF CHRISTINE KAUFMAN, c.1964-65

Cornell was as allergic to public attention as Kusama thrived on it, and keeping himself to himself he composed surreal microcosms of imaginary adventures. Resembling well-travelled suitcases or journals, the boxes were furnished with old ticket stubs, clippings from foreign newspapers, celestial maps, used stamps, pictures of caged birds. He would mail these like love letters to the latest actress or ballet dancer that he was taken with, although he was regularly rejected by most women he desired. An intensely private man, he rarely allowed these tokens of his affection to be sold despite high demand - however he quickly became one of Kusama's most useful benefactors, giving her several of his boxes to sell in order to support herself.

Sharing a tendency towards obsessive compulsion, the two enjoyed mutual admiration for each other's artistic genius. Although she had created a scandalous reputation for herself, Kusama's deep phobia of sex stemmed from her childhood when her mother would often force her to spy on her father's womanising escapade with geishas. This fear was complemented by Cornell's impotence, and they naturally fell into a kind of passionate platonism, like two strange birds.

They spent days at Cornell's house in Queens, sketching each other naked – much to the annoyance of Cornell's mother who also lived there and thoroughly disapproved of the unlikely pairing.

The marked extremes between the artists only fuelled their attraction to each other - Kusama's methodical monsters spilling larger-than-life from their frames in hot pursuit of eternity, Cornell's fragile shadow boxes safely holding his locked-up ghosts. Even physically, the two embodied their work, observing the stares that they attracted when seen out in public together. Occasionally mistaken for a homeless man, Cornell dressed himself like a tramp and worked in a studio that resembled a life-size cabinet of curiosities. Scattered amongst stacks of magazine clippings, his hoarded treasures were described by Kusama as 'disorderly mess'. Although their aesthetics were polar opposite, the couple shared the same overwhelming sense of isolation and loneliness, as well as a preoccupation with imprisonment and escape.

Frustrated by the presence of Cornell's mother - who hated her son's girlfriend so much that she once threw a bucket of water over them as they kissed - and the claustrophobia of Cornell's unrelenting attention, Kusama turned back to her own career. Although she gradually withdrew herself from the relationship, they remained in contact during his last years, throughout the deaths of his beloved brother and mother, and his declining physical condition. Once in a while she would relent and visit, but Cornell's sudden heart failure occurred whilst Kusama was far away on business in Tokyo.



JOSEPH CORNELL, JUAN GRIS COCKATOO, 1953-54

The news of Cornell's death hit Kusama hard, and she returned to Japan the following year, in 1973, in rapidly deteriorating health. Back amongst those that mocked her 'Queen of Scandal' title and didn't consider her a serious artist, the hallucinations worsened and she spiralled into a severe depression. Her father died shortly afterwards and, despite psychiatric treatment, Kusama found the anxiety unbearable. She admitted herself to the Seiwa Hospital for the Mentally Ill as a permanent resident in 1977.

Entering into the intensity of her loss, Kusama slowly began to create new works by using the collage materials that Cornell had left her. Veiling his carefully selected cut-outs of birds, insects and reptiles with her signature patterned plumes, Kusama pieced together a moving tribute to her lover and re-established her artistic reputation in Japan, exhibiting early versions of these works in 1975 at her first solo show since leaving New York.

Joseph Cornell had wanted to make a final 'Yayoi' box before the end of his life, and was hoping for her to send photographs that he could use. Regretfully, Kusama writes that she 'failed to do it in time, and Joseph was still waiting for them when he died.' The series of collages to which she devoted herself re-enters that dialogue, honouring his work with the ultimate recognition from one artist to another, planting herself, in her own way, permanently within his created world.

The collages are poetic and quietly introverted, hinting at unreachable realms behind a dark glass. Particularly poignant are the images of robins and eagles that recall Cornell's well-loved Aviary collages and Bird Boxes. Illustrating the tension felt by both artists, they explore mutual longings for unbounded freedom, and an awareness of the world's limitations. The pieces are a mnemonic taxonomy of pinned butterflies and pressed flowers, as delicate and disturbed as the contents of Cornell's tormented mind.



JOSEPH CORNELL, UNTITLED (THE HOTEL EDEN), c.1945

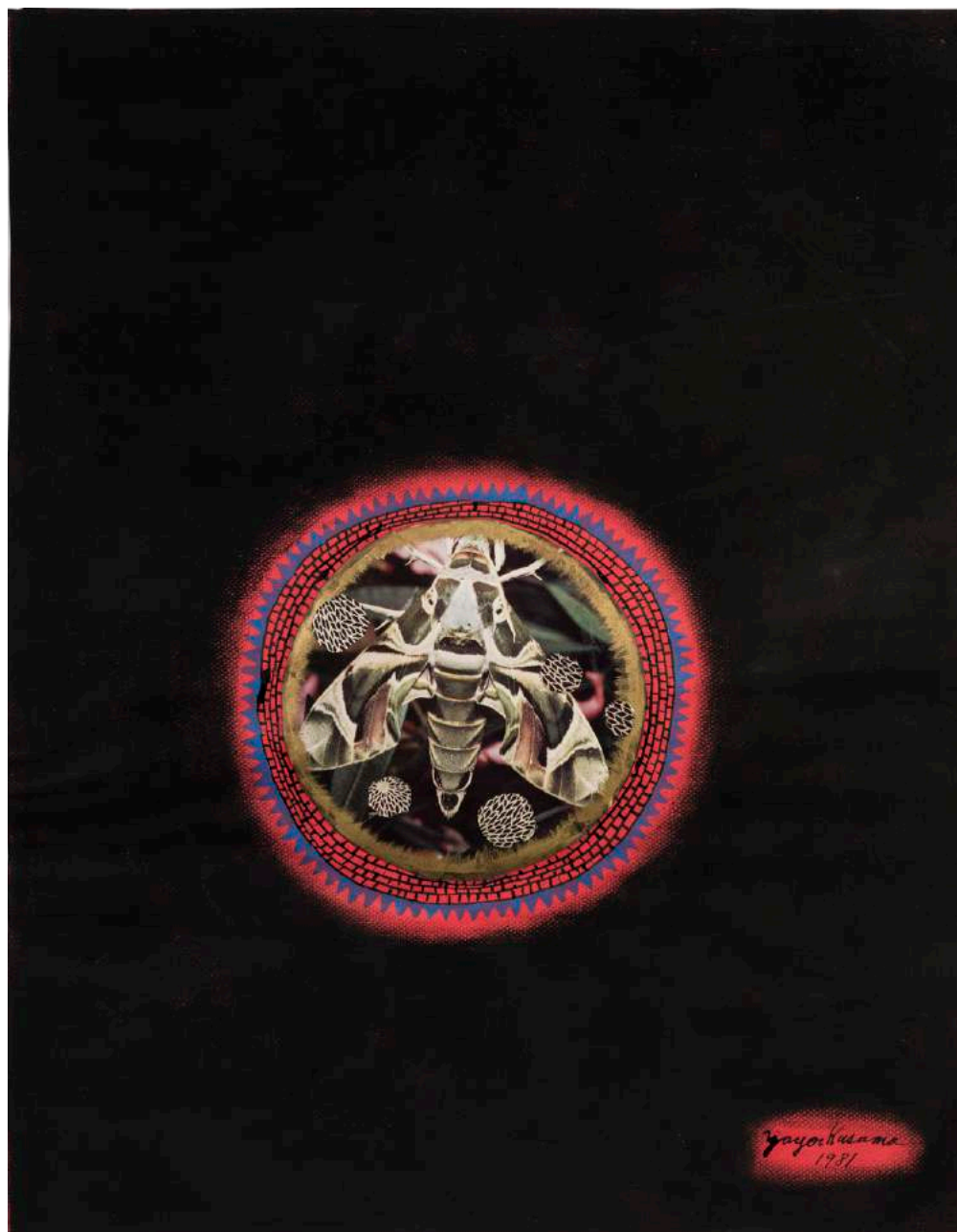


# Plates

Yayoi Kusama, *Bird*, 1980, Collage, pastel and ink on paper, 65.7 by 50.8 cm.

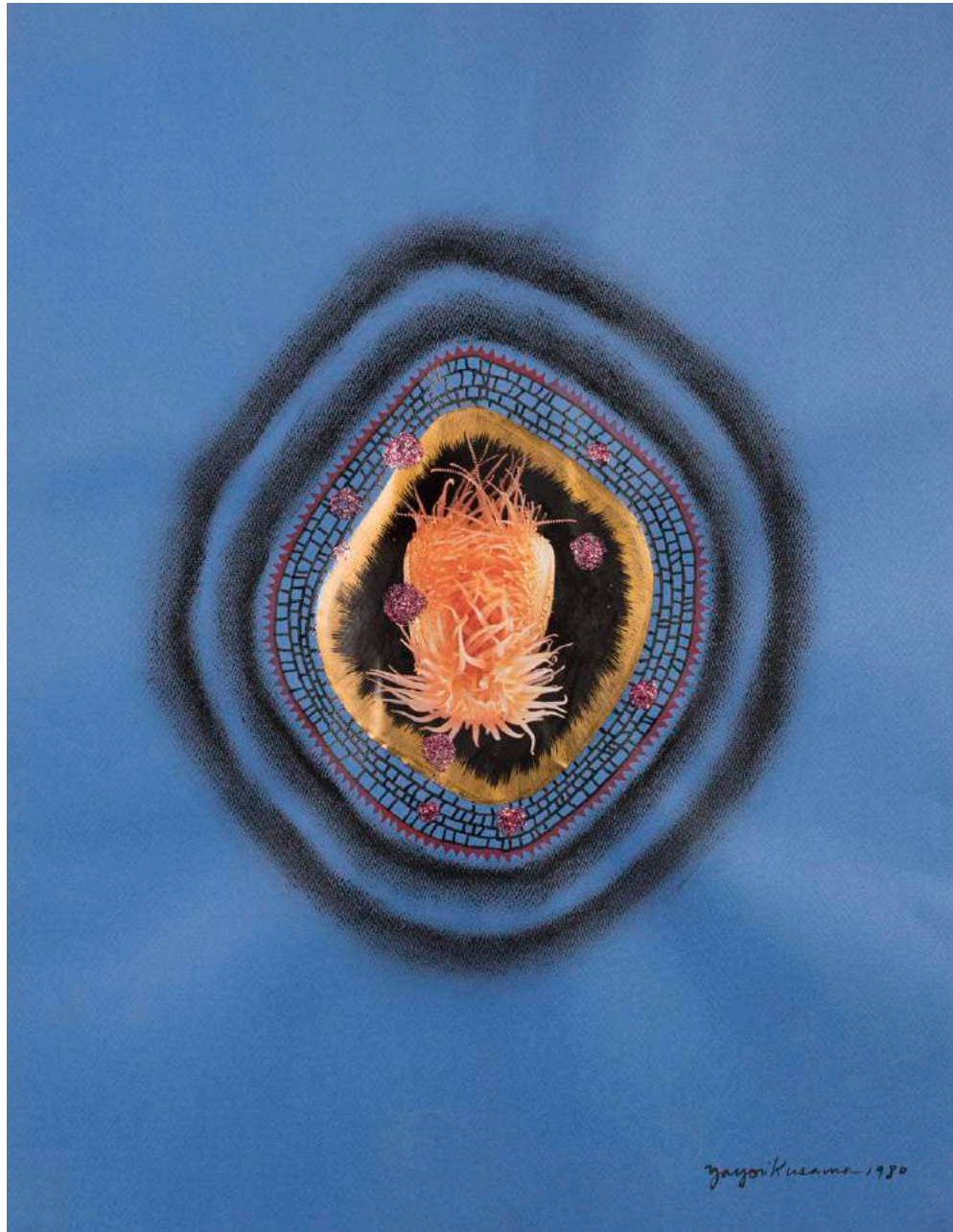


Yayoi Kusama, *Night*, 1981, Collage, pastel and ink on paper, 66 by 51.5 cm.

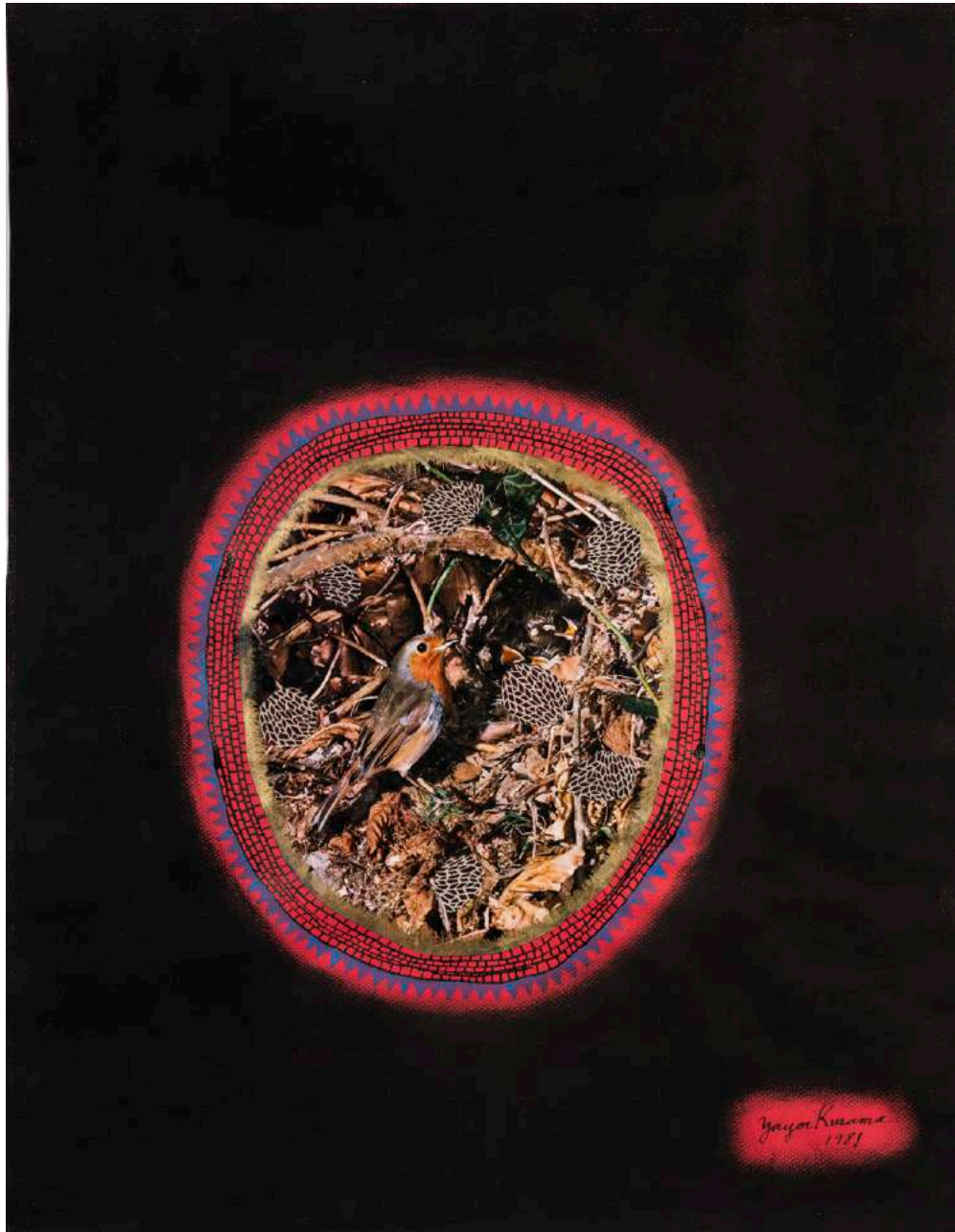


Yayoi Kusama  
1977

Yayoi Kusama, *The Sea*, 1980, Collage, pastel and ink on paper, 65.7 by 51.2 cm.



Yayoi Kusama, *A Nest*, 1981, Collage, pastel and ink on paper, 65 by 50.5 cm.

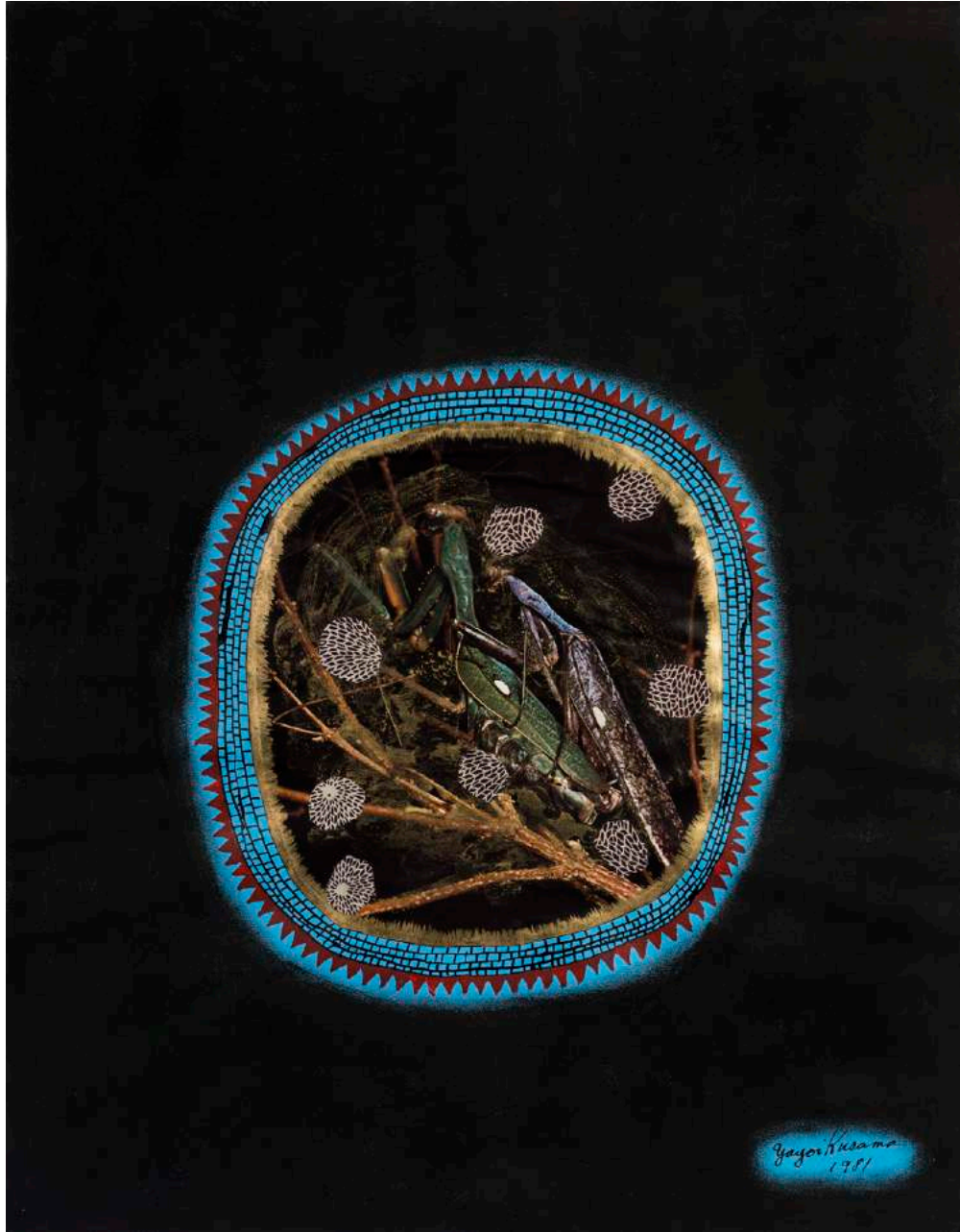


Yayoi Kusama, *Treetops*, 1980, Collage, pastel and ink on paper, 65.7 by 51.1 cm.



1980  
Jayo Kusama

Yayoi Kusama, *Mantis*, 1981, Collage, pastel and ink on paper, 65 by 50.5 cm.



# **Yayoi Kusama**

**Collages: 1980-1981**