



Tampa Museum of Art



Leo Villareal: Sky (Tampa)
Museum South Facade

The Tampa Museum of Art commissioned digital light artist Leo Villareal to design an installation for the façade of the new museum. The exterior of the new facility features programmable light emitting diodes (LEDs), 45 feet high and 300 feet long, embedded within two-layers of perforated aluminum panels. In daylight, the museum’s façade creates a moiré-like pattern, and in darkness Villareal’s LED installation will illuminate downtown Tampa. Villareal’s work will premiere on Thursday February 4th as part of the museum’s gala grand opening. It will remain on view every evening and will become part of the museum’s permanent collection.

“As we finalized the plans for our new building, we became more committed to the incorporation of a permanent public art component as part of the building,” Todd D. Smith, the museum’s executive director recently commented. “LED lights were always a part of the overall design of the museum’s architect Stanley Saitowitz. As our museum opens its doors, it was vitally important that we make

a statement about the nature of what visitors can expect from the museum experience.”

“Leo is one of the pioneers in utilizing light media within the context of architecture. We wanted a bold pronouncement that one of the new directions for our collection and exhibition offerings will be in the arena of new media, and we could not think of a more appropriate artist to launch our commitment to this area than Leo Villareal.”

"I am inspired by the building's clean, minimal expanse," said Leo Villareal. "The Tampa Museum of Art is ideally situated in a dynamic city surrounded by beautiful parks, the riverfront and university. "Sky (Tampa)" will reflect the life and activity around it, functioning as a mirror to a diverse audience."

The City of Tampa has enjoyed national and international recognition for its celebration of light art. Offered in 2006 and 2009 and an initiative of the City's Art Programs Division Lights on Tampa invites artists from around the globe to create light works in downtown Tampa. According to Smith, "The museum wanted to assist in furthering the aesthetic mission of Lights on Tampa by installing a permanent light component in its architecture and its permanent collection." Funds for this acquisition were provided by the museum through its contemporary art acquisition fund and a special gift from the Gasparilla Festival of the Arts, Inc. in celebration of the museum's grand opening and the Raymond James Gasparilla Festival of the Arts' 40th anniversary festival to be held on March 6-7, 2010. Funds to support the permanent installation of the LED lights on the museum's exterior were provided through the City of Tampa's Art in Public Art ordinance.

In addition, the museum will organize a temporary exhibition of Leo's works for summer/fall 2010 to provide a context for our visitors to experience the range of his creations.

Villareal resides in New York, has been included in solo and group exhibitions, and made numerous site-specific commissions throughout the world, at major cultural institutions. The National Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C recently purchased his work Multiverse, which is on view in the corridor that connects the museum's East and West Wings. Other installations include: P.S.1 MoMA, Queens, NY; Brooklyn Academy of Music, Brooklyn, NY; Albright Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo, NY; and the Nerman Museum of Contemporary Art, Overland Park, KS. Born in Albuquerque, NM, in 1967, 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 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. For more information about Villareal and his work, visit www.villareal.net.

ABOUT THE LED LIGHTING CONSTRUCTION

- * 144 four-foot RGB LED lights on the Southside of the museum
- * 28 Inablers (controllers of the LEDs) prewired on all four sides of the museum for future addition of LEDs
- * Programmable Control Center on site
- * Energy-efficient lighting system
- * Designed through APG Electric in Clearwater, FL