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sleek

The Hyper-Reality of Rubber Pyramids

Fred Tomaselli

Interview by Carl von Siemens

Artist Fred Tomaselli composes his works from the drugs of everyday American life – ecstasy, marihuana, LSD and aspirin. His art is all about constructing windows to multiple realities, from Haight Ashbury to Disneyland, always with a good dose of romanticism. sleek talks to him about how things seem and how they really are in the global village.



Fred Tomaselli, Airborne Event, 2003. Leaves, photo collage, gouache, acrylic and resin on wood panel, 213 x 152 cm. Courtesy carlier | gebauer, Berlin.

sleek: You come originally from California. Is that important for your art?

Fred Tomaselli: I grew up nearby Disneyland. Everything I saw was potentially a façade or fabrication. In this way my childhood prepared me for the hyper-reality which comprises today's global culture.

sleek: What do you mean by »hyper-reality«?

FT: A hyper-reality is a reality which has been so interfered with by the media that it's impossible to tell what's real and what isn't. Las Vegas for instance is a hyper-real city, with fake New York cityscapes next to false Italian palaces and Egyptian rubber pyramids. At the end of the day it's very hard to tell what's real and what isn't.

sleek: The only thing that's real in your paintings is the drugs.

FT: I like that my works physically contain reality-altering substances. I'm extremely interested in how an art object can alter our perceptions.