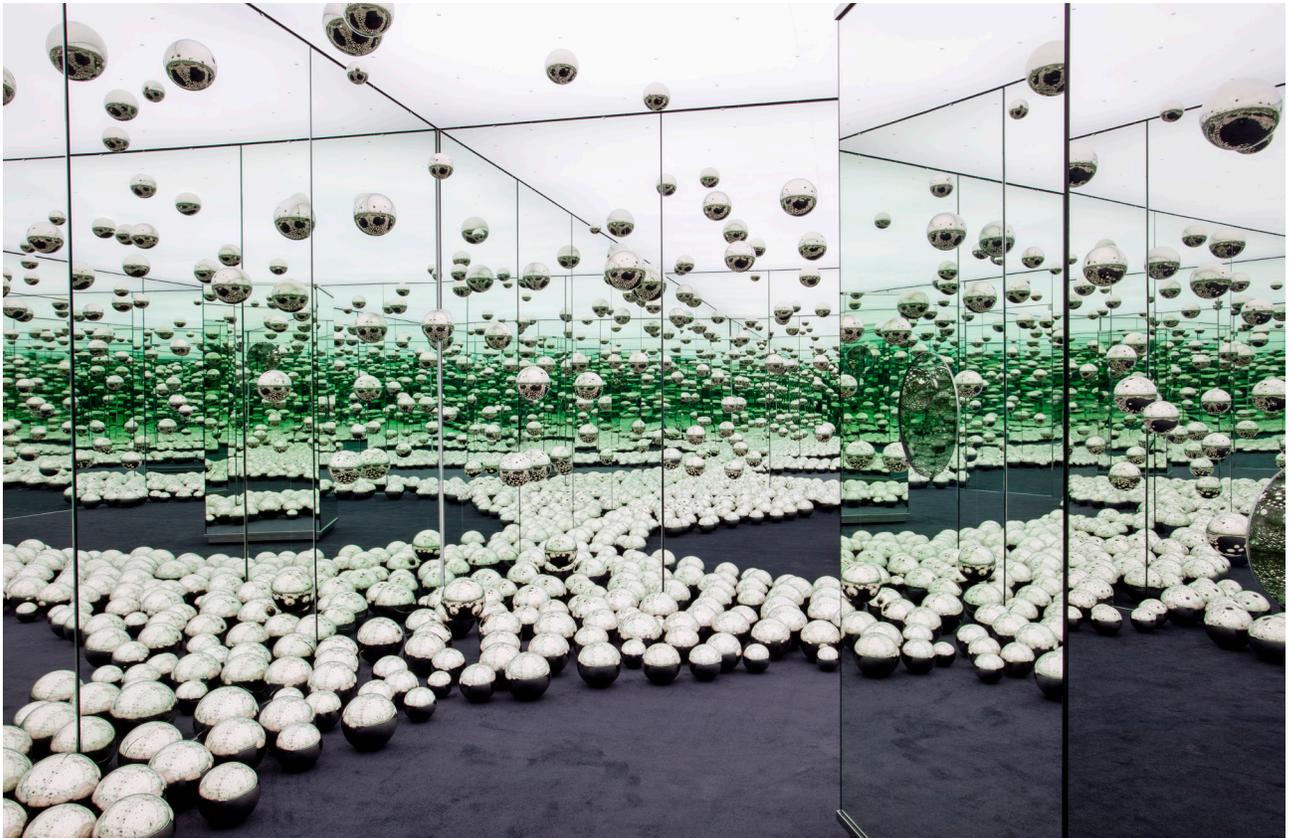


## YAYOI KUSAMA | LET'S SURVIVE TOGETHER

“When the people see their own reflection multiplied to infinity they then sense that there is no limit....” – Yayoi Kusama



Yayoi Kusama. *INFINITY MIRRORED ROOM - LET'S SURVIVE FOREVER*, 2017. © Yayoi Kusama

*Let's Survive Together* is a 400sq foot immersive environment created by Yayoi Kusama. One of the first contemporary artworks to be acquired through crowd funding, it now holds permanent residence right here at the Art Gallery of Ontario!

For over 60 years, Kusama has explored important themes such as life and death, love and fear, the universe and the after-life. Like art-making itself, which has always been a meditative practice for Kusama, this immersive installation offers space for peace and mindfulness.

In 1965, Kusama produced her first Infinity Mirror Room, *Phalli's Field*. Since then she has produced over 20 rooms, each of which offers visitors the chance to step into an illusion of infinite space. *Let's Survive Together* includes stainless steel spheres of different sizes, and when they are reflected by the mirrors they produce a kaleidoscopic effect. The mirrored walls of the room also create the impression that the room goes on forever—an illusion of infinite space. As well, within the mirrored environment sits another, smaller chamber, also made of mirrors. When you look into this smaller space, it seems to be filled with endlessly replicating steel spheres.

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# Teacher Resource

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As you walk around the spheres in *Let's Survive Together*, they distort and replicate your reflection and the reflections of those around you. Kusama notes, "The silver ball is also representative of the moon, of sunshine, of peace. In essence, it symbolizes the union of man and nature".

## Questions to consider:

What else can you think of that is a sphere? What other 3D form could Kusama have used in her art, what shape would you use and why?

## Biography:

Yayoi Kusama was born in 1929 and grew up near her family's plant nursery in Matsumoto, Japan. After the Second World War, she went to Kyoto to study the traditional Japanese style of painting known as Nihonga. Kusama moved to the United States in 1957 to pursue her artistic career. After returning to Japan in the early 1970s, her work received much acclaim, and in 1993, she was the first woman to represent Japan with a solo exhibition at the Venice Biennale.

## CREATIVE RESPONSE:

In Kusama's Infinity Rooms, lights, dots, and even pumpkins are reflected by mirrored environments to create an illusion of infinite space.

In this activity, experiment with perspective. This creative response integrates science, math, and art. Enjoy the experiment!

Materials: tin foil, paper, pencil, ruler, mirror

Let's create a framework for a one point perspective drawing.

- Using a ruler, draw a horizontal line (the horizon) across your page. Then, draw a dot (the vanishing point) in the middle of the horizon. Extend the perspective lines (orthogonal /diagonal lines) from the dot outward toward the edges of your paper.
- Crumch up foil paper to create three spheres: small, medium, and large. You can also cut circles in various sizes out of the foil, or experiment with both circles and spheres! Position the spheres at different places on your perspective line, and place your mirror at the vanishing point. Take a close look, what do you see?
- Experiment to create the impression of infinite space through the reflections of spheres in the mirror.

IMAGE: Yayoi Kusama. *INFINITY MIRRORED ROOM - LET'S SURVIVE FOREVER*, 2017. Wood, metal, glass mirrors, LED lighting system, monofilament, stainless steel balls and carpet, Installed: 312.4 x 624.8 x 622.9 cm. Purchased with funds from the David Yuile & Mary Elizabeth Hodgson Fund, Michelle Koerner & Kevin Doyle, Robert Dorrance & Gail Drummond, The Schulich Foundation, Soichiro & Junko Yamamoto, Diane Bald & Michael Budman, Don & Denyse Green, DH Gales Foundation, Maxine Granovsky Gluskin & Ira Gluskin, Barry Appleton & Magaly Bianchini, Emmanuelle Gattuso, Sheryle & David Saunders, Robin & David Young, Laura E. Baldini, Diana Billes, Edison Chai, Julian Chan & Yi Hyun Park, The Francis and Denise Connolly Family, Creeds, Eileen Farrow, Ivan Fecan & Sandra Faire, Hallisey Family, Victoria Jackman, Val Koziol, David Kozman & Kristin Blakely-Kozman, The Charles & Jane Kucey Foundation Fund, James Lee & the Julie Institute, Chelsea Longaphy & Bernie Li, Martha LA McCain, Abby, Perry & Jordan Minuk, Carolyn D. Mullin, Samuel & Alice Peralta, In Memory of Pierrette & Abel Rancourt, Heather & Aaron Regent, Shevlen Family, Mary Sinclair, Jay Smith & Laura Rapp, J. Kenneth & Margaret Syer-Torrance, and the generosity of thousands of art lovers, 2018. © Yayoi Kusama, Courtesy David Zwirner, New York; Ota Fine Arts, Tokyo/Singapore/Shanghai; Victoria Miro, London/Venice. Photo AGO 2018/28

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