

# Gallery of Dreams

Art

He built it. They came. The remarkable story of Galerie Jenner.

## "Destination Unknown"

Through July 10 at Galerie Jenner, Sailboat Bend Artist Lofts, 1310 SW Second Court, Loft 307, Fort Lauderdale. By appointment. Call 954-609-7009, or visit [galeriejenner.com](http://galeriejenner.com).

BY MICHAEL MILLS

You'd think photographer Jeremiah Jenner had just won an Academy Award — he's that excited, caught up in the peculiar blend of humility and disbelief, exhilaration and relief, that we see onstage during awards shows. And truth be told, he's not that far off. His Galerie Jenner has just celebrated its one-year anniversary, truly cause for jubilation in South Florida, where art galleries come and, more to the point, go with depressing regularity.

Like a red-carpet habitué, Jenner even has a thank-you list of those he says made Galerie Jenner's success possible. Just over a year ago, Galerie Jenner was little more than a dream, a gleam in its namesake's eye. Jenner was on a waiting list to get a space at the Sailboat Bend Artist Lofts, an ambitious project at the edge of downtown Fort Lauderdale that offers up-and-coming artists a place to live and work. I was at an event in the complex's in-house gallery when the photographer found out that his wait was over, and he was like a giddy kid, dragging me upstairs to see his newly acquired studio, which he confidently declared was slated to be not only his residence but his own gallery. I was happy for him but also a little skeptical, given the market's dismal track record when it comes to galleries.

Rarely have I been so relieved to be proved wrong. Jenner's four big shows since he christened his gallery have gotten steadily stronger, culminating in the current exhibition, the appropriately titled "Destination Unknown." Instead of cramming as much art as he can accommodate into the space, as he did with his last couple of shows, which boasted 60-plus works by as many as 35 artists, this time he has settled on a much more manageable roster of 11 artists (including himself), focusing more on depth than on breadth.

All that art would go to waste without an audience,

however, and Jenner is pleased to report that people are showing up to see the work he has assembled. The reception for his previous exhibition, "Cheesecake," drew close to 300 attendees, and he says his an-

niversary party had more than 200 people stop in over the course of an evening.

Best of all, Jenner is attracting the kind of talent that can make his gallery a real art destination. Two of his current crop alone

— Janet Gold and Bonnie Shapiro — would make a visit to the gallery worth it. But even his second- and third-string artists are no slouches. Although there's a little filler in "Destination Unknown," most of the work would easily fit in at a more established gallery.

For years, I've followed the work of Gold, who has a studio in the Third Avenue Art District and teaches at the Art Institute of Fort Lauderdale.

She has long had a gift for abstraction, as evidenced by her oil pastel paintings and photography, but lately I've been amazed to see how well she has settled into her groove with collages. Here, she's represented by eight new mixed-media abstracts that are uniformly excellent. She has an enviable intuitive feel for how to combine disparate ingredients — torn scraps of paper, fragments of vintage books, pieces of fabric, wooden boxes — that feel just right together.

Shapiro, a painter whose work couldn't be more different, is equally at home in her medium. Her five carnival scenes on display here are burnished with nostalgia filtered through an adult awareness that the carnival might not be all we remember it to be. These snapshots of memory are typically sparsely populated and tinged with a sweet sadness as tangible as the atmosphere of twilight.

Jenner has also had the good fortune to discover the crisp, crystalline photography of Isaac Allen Sandy, who was featured last year in the inaugural show at Weston's Painted Easel gallery. And he includes the work of one of his top photography students, Jody Leshinsky, whose *Chinatown Blues* is an atmospheric slice of urban life.

Among Jenner's other finds are Ernesto Kunde, a young Latin American artist with a distinctive take on life in the subtropics; Robert McKeown, whose collages often comment on images of masculinity in contemporary culture; and Regina Jestrow, whose

fabric constructions — a suite of mobiles, a tepee large enough to sit in — bring to mind the soft sculptures of the great Claes Oldenburg. Jenner's gambit of giving an entire wall of his limited space to Babette Herschberger's sparse abstracts painted on wooden panels also pays off.

On some level, Jenner's success is unsurprising and wholly deserved. Who else, after all, decides to turn his home into an art gallery — and then actually follows through on it? Having worked in a museum, I remember well the unexpected thrill of leaving my desk and stepping into a space filled with art. Now I imagine what it must be like for Jeremiah Jenner, walking into his own living room every day to be reminded, "Hey, there's a gallery here!" I suspect it doesn't get much better than that.

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## "Altered States: Jose Alvarez, Yayoi Kusama, Fred Tomaselli, and Leo Villareal"

Through July 17 at the Norton Museum of Art, 1451 S. Olive Ave., West Palm Beach. Call 561-832-5196, or visit [norton.org](http://norton.org).

## Trippin' the Light Fantastic

Four artists turn the Norton into a "psychedelic shack."

BY MICHAEL MILLS

The Norton's "Altered States" is a relatively small show that traffics in big art. There are just over two dozen works by four contemporary artists, but the scale of the pieces tends to be big and the themes even bigger. One temporary site-specific installation — Jose Alvarez's *Vibrating Strands of Energy* — is about 13 feet by 56 feet and incorporates a doorway in its center. Another Alvarez piece, *We Came From the Stars*, consists of four contiguous panels, each 44 inches by 72 inches.

There's a hallucinogenic sheen to Alvarez's imagery, which is often so vibrant that it threatens to dance off the canvas. The same can be said for Fred Tomaselli's big mixed-media collages, which sometimes incorporate the literal trappings of psychedelia — pills, marijuana leaves, magic mushrooms — into forms that resemble gigantic mandalas or massive strands of DNA. And then there's Leo Villareal's trippy ceiling installation of intricately programmed flashing lights, best seen when you're lying on your back.

In terms of ideas, we're talking *cosmic* here, as in the expanding universe and spirituality and the portals of perception. These three American artists seek not so much to re-create drug-induced experiences as to tap into higher visionary realms. Their visual extravagance is balanced by the presence of Yayoi Kusama, an octogenarian Japanese woman who takes a more austere but no less contemplative approach. Together they make up a quartet whose work delights the eye and stimulates the mind and spirit — not a bad combination at all.



Janet Gold's  
*Daybook No. 3 1854.*