## Yayoi Kusama

Yayoi Kusama is a Japanese contemporary artist who works primarily in sculpture and installation, but is also active in painting, performance, video art, fashion, poetry, fiction, and other arts.

Her work is based in conceptual art and shows some attributes of feminism, minimalism, surrealism, Art Brut, pop art, and abstract expressionism, and is infused with autobiographical, psychological, and sexual content. She has been acknowledged as one of the most important living artists to come out of Japan.

Yayoi Kusama’s life experiences were not exactly pleasant. Born into an affluent family in Japan, her mother was unsupportive of her art and was physically abusive. Kusama’s father was involved in extramarital affairs, which led to her lifelong contempt for sexuality. During World War II, she was sent to a military factory producing parachutes as a teenager “in closed darkness.” After living in Tokyo and France for a period, then moved to the United States at 27 years old.

The artist’s mental illness is simultaneously a source of inspiration and frustration–Kusama was hospitalized many times and even attempted suicide in the 1960s-70s. Later, she returned to Japan and voluntarily checked herself into Seiwa Hospital for the Mentally Ill. She permanently resides there, and makes her work in a nearby studio. For her, art has become a creative escape.

Yayoyi Kusama makes lots of different types of art – paintings, sculptures, performances and installations, but they have one thing in common, DOTS!

Yayoi Kusama tells the story of how when she was a little girl she had a hallucination that freaked her out. She was in a field of flowers when they all started talking to her! The heads of flowers were like dots that went on as far as she could see, and she felt as if she was disappearing or as she calls it ‘self-obliterating’ – into this field of endless dots. This weird experience influenced most of her later work.

By adding all-over marks and dots to her paintings, drawings, objects and clothes she feels as if she is making them (and herself) melt into, and become part of, the bigger universe.

Except for visual arts, Kusama also wrote many books. In 1977, Kusama published a book of poems and paintings entitled 7. One year later, her first novel Manhattan Suicide Addict appeared. Between 1983 and 1990, she finished the novels The Hustler's Grotto of Christopher Street (1983), The Burning of St Mark's Church (1985), Between Heaven and Earth (1988), Woodstock Phallus Cutter (1988), Aching Chandelier (1989), Double Suicide at Sakuragazuka (1989), and Angels in Cape Cod (1990), alongside several issues of the magazine S&M Sniper in collaboration with photographer [Nobuyoshi Araki](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nobuyoshi_Araki).

Her most recent writing endeavor includes her autobiography Infinity Net published in 2003 that depicts her life from growing up in Japan, her departure to the United States, and her return to her home country, where she now resides. Infinity Net also includes some of the artist's poetry and photos of her exhibitions.