

Felix Gonzalez-Torres
“Untitled” (L.A.)



February 5, 2022 – May 29, 2022

Felix Gonzalez-Torres

“Untitled” (L.A.)

Green candies individually wrapped in
cellophane, endless supply

Overall dimensions vary with installation

Jointly owned by Art Bridges and Crystal Bridges

Museum of American Art

On loan from Art Bridges

Sculpture Court

“Meaning can only be formulated when we compare, when we bring information to our daily level, to our ‘private’ sphere. Otherwise information just goes by.”

Felix Gonzalez-Torres was known for his minimalist, often conceptual, installations and sculptures that assembled quantities of a common object, such as a string of lights, stack of paper, or individually wrapped candy, to convey complex meaning and encourage audience participation. Through the manner of displaying the artwork, along with the process of the viewer’s participation, each work became a metaphor for loss and healing, as seen in light bulbs that expire and are replaced, or as papers or candies are taken by visitors and replenished by the art museum. This cycle of depletion and

renewal over time is key to the visitor's experience with, and understanding of, Gonzalez-Torres's creative practice. The artist sought to transform the spectator from a passive receiver to an active, reflective participant motivated by thought, feeling, and social action.

Gonzalez-Torres addressed universal themes such as loss, impermanence, love, illness, rejuvenation, and hope in his interactive artworks. Focusing on the simplicity of a single object arranged in large quantities, the artist invited viewers to participate in establishing meaning in the works of art. This intellectual and physical inclusion of the audience defied conventional notions of art's preciousness, as visitors were asked to touch, even consume the work of art.

"Untitled" (LA) was created by Gonzalez-Torres as a response to his personal grief

over his partner's death from AIDS. The artist stated, "I never stopped loving Ross. Just because he's dead doesn't mean I stopped loving him. I make work because I still have some hope." Although the artist created this installation during the height of the AIDS epidemic, his artworks continue to resonate with us today as we all struggle to cope with our acute sense of loss for those no longer present, our disconnection to others and the world, and our lives forever altered by the current pandemic. The installation and its interactivity is also a celebration of generosity and love as Gonzalez-Torres offered a universal and enduring message of hope, "We need our own space to think and digest what we see. And we also have to trust the viewer and trust the power of the object. And the power is in simple things. I like the kind of clarity

that that brings to thought. It keeps thought from being opaque.”

Instructions for Participation

Please take one.

Organized by the Boise Art Museum

Support provided by

Art  Bridges

About the Installation at BAM

In Felix Gonzalez-Torres's installations, the artist ceded control of the final form of a work to the staff who displayed it at their museum. Even today, the way you experience the artwork at the Boise Art Museum is unique to this space. Only the type and color of candy is specified to the art museum by the Felix Gonzalez-Torres Foundation. Our arrangement of the artwork is as intentional and symbolic as the replenishment of the candies, mindful and meditative.

One of our goals in presenting "*Untitled*" (LA) is to restore public engagement with BAM after its long absence, due to the pandemic, which has caused us a tremendous sense of loss. It is our hope that by interacting with the installation and participating in the

associated educational programs we have developed in collaboration with community partners, visitors will experience a greater connection with us as we collectively heal during a time of grief, isolation, anxiety, and depression, and as we seek solace and meaning together. By taking a candy from *“Untitled” (LA)*, your participation creates the work’s ultimate meaning and shared sense of community.

About the Artist

Felix Gonzalez-Torres (b. 1957, Guàimaro, Cuba – d. 1996, Miami, FL)

Felix Gonzalez-Torres was one of the most significant American artists to emerge in the late 1980s and early 1990s. Living and working in New York City between 1979 and 1995, he studied photography at the Pratt Institute, received an MFA from the International Center for Photography and New York University, and twice participated in the Whitney Museum of American Art Independent Study Program. His artwork has been shown internationally in solo and group exhibitions, including at the Museum of Modern Art and the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; the Art Institute of Chicago; the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art; and the Tate London, all of which have significant holdings of Gonzalez-Torres's work. Distinct from what he

considered to be his own practice, the artist also was part of Group Material (1987 to 1991), a New York-based art collective whose members worked collaboratively to initiate community education and cultural activism. Gonzalez-Torres died in 1996 from AIDS-related complications.

Nelson Gallery

Master the art of letting go, live for the moment, relax, and enjoy!

Use water and the brush to paint on the surface to make your creation come to life. As the water slowly evaporates, your art will magically disappear, leaving you with a clean slate and a clear mind.

The memory of your experience remains even when the lines are gone.