

Time Out

New York

TIME OUT NEW YORK MARCH 21-28, 2002

Art | Reviews

Leo Villareal
Sandra Gering, through Sat 23
(see Chelsea).

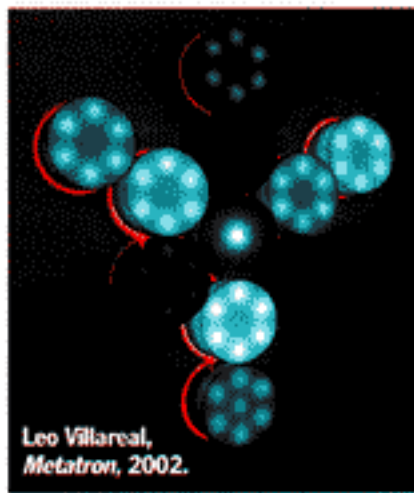
After appearing in a parade of group shows as the hot new new-media thing, Leo Villareal finally has his first solo exhibition. The show contains three light sculptures, each made of semitranslucent disks of plastic containing colored lights that blink slowly and seductively. In the darkened gallery, they draw viewers in with the same rhythmic, hypnotic allure of a strobe light or lighthouse. Languidly changing, these pieces sug-

gest a wish to be understood, as their patterns possess a certain logic, whether mathematical or musical.

One sculpture, made of 13 disks that are arranged into an asterisklike form, has a softly undulating effect—a quality enhanced by the Caribbean blue of the plastic as the sculpture lights up and by its night-sea darkness when the lights die down. Meanwhile, an ominous synth soundtrack encourages viewers to sink into this optical quicksand of hazily winking lights.

The two other pieces are large, single circles. One has a fuchsia center that seems to play a call-and-response game with an outer ring of purple. Various shapes seem to form as a result of this play of lights: a hexagram and, again, an asterisk. But, like a squid gliding just beneath the surface of the water, these forms are never totally apparent; one must imagine them by piecing together the elements part by part. The third sculpture, with orange and pink bulbs, also does a pretty dance that makes it hard to look away. One could stay in front of it all day, watching and listening intently, and wondering what those beguiling colors might be whispering to each other in their obscure visual language.

—Sarah Valdez



Leo Villareal,
Metatron, 2002.