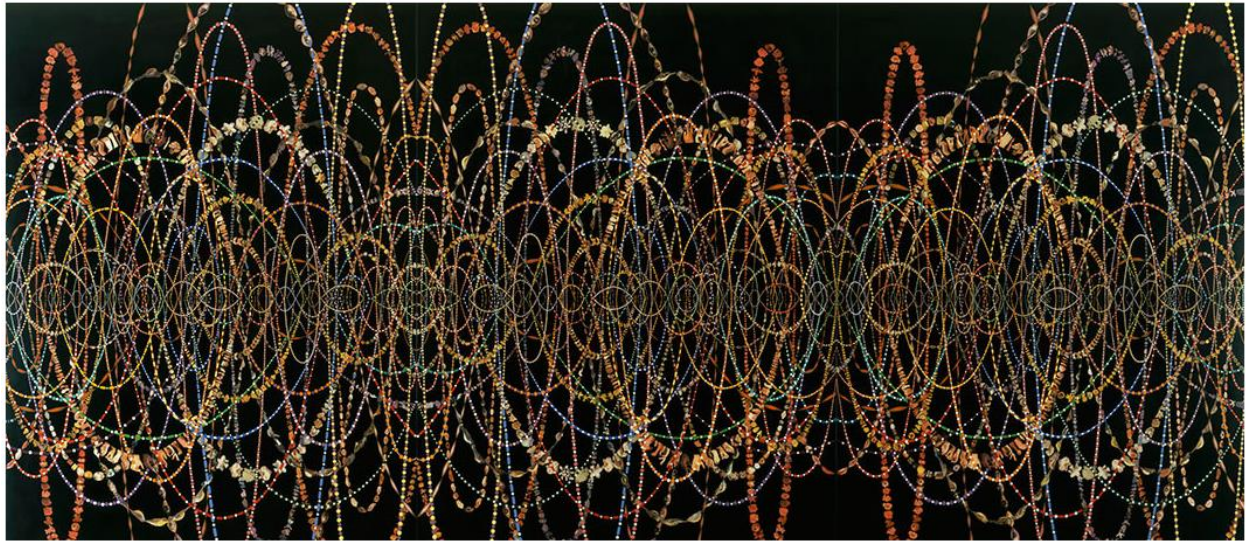


JAMES COHAN GALLERY

Terranova, Charissa N., "Focus: Fred Tomaselli," *Arts + Cultures Texas*,
February 2014. Accessed online: <http://artsandculturetx.com/focus-fred-tomaselli/>



FOCUS: FRED TOMASELLI

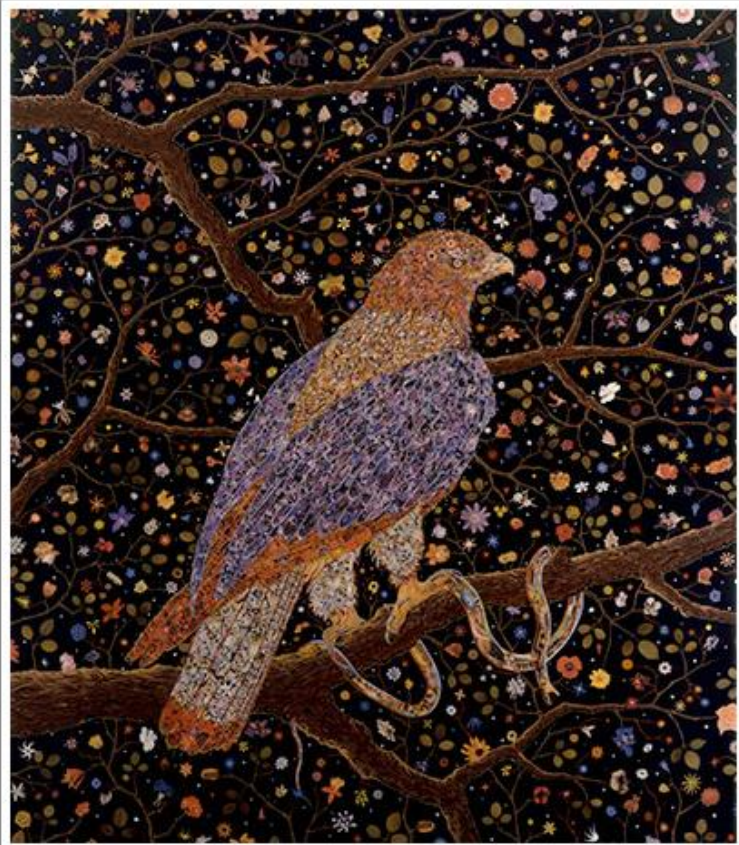
FEB 24, 2014 | CHARISSA N. TERRANOVA | NO COMMENT | ART, NORTH TEXAS

IMAGE ABOVE: Fred Tomaselli, *Flipper*, 2008. Leaves, photo collage, acrylic and resin on wood panel. Overall: 84 x 180 in. (213.36 x 457.201 cm). Panels (each, 3 total): 84 x 60 in. (213.36 x 152.4 cm). Glenstone.

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FORT WORTH—The art of Fred Tomaselli is refreshing in its clean, clear, unreconstructed negotiation of technology. His work is complex and difficult to make, but there is very little that is digital about it. Paintings combined with infinite clippings —of noses, hands, forearms, eyes, and the like: it is data visualization without the burden of noisy data. He deploys none of the predictable tactics of cheeky irony so rampant in today's art.

Very well wrought, the work is phantasmagorical rather than serious: suggestive of hallucinogens, the Wonderland of the West Coast, and Peter Max on a better day in a better world. His work pops with the pluck of



Fred Tomaselli

Avian Flower Serpent, 2006

Leaves, photo collage, acrylic, gouache and resin on wood panel

Overall: 84 x 72 1/2 in. (213.36 x 184.15 cm)

Collection Glenn and Amanda Fuhrman NY, Courtesy The FLAG Art Foundation.

freshness even while rendered in the old medium of collage. Not of dada but of the surf, the crafting of Tomaselli's collages comes from his time as surfboard maker in Los Angeles. They bear black shiny surfaces with cutout forms

meticulously embedded in resin made glassy by the heat of a blowtorch. The layering of image and poured plastic makes for vertigo on the sly: a topsy-turvy play of small figure against depthless ground. Think here of the perverse beauty of an insect fossilized in amber.

Study for Fish (2013) and *Study for Head* (2013) hang together. Mid-size painting-collages, they are perfect black rectangles showing bodies within bodies. Striations of cutout images of toys, tools, and sundry plants and body parts erupt from the fish's head. The surface is carefully dotted with bead-like patterns of paint. The adjacent head is configured out of cutout pictures of anatomy—intestines inside of legs, the endocrine system inside of the chest.

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Much larger and hung in a separate room, *Flipper* (2008) is full of patterns: sine and cosine waves of tiny clippings of hands, flowers, eyes, butterflies, mouths, birds, and gems—all of which Tomaselli has cadged from print matter. The pictures embedded within the black rectangle vie with painted patterns on the surface, while registering cohesively as sound waves from afar.

More than a master of making, both painter and collagist, Tomaselli is a consummate taxonomist. This work is as much about amassing and organizing pictures as it is about high craft: his brilliantly obsessive collections of images-as-parts—notebooks of cutout noses, hands, mouths, dimples, birds, flowers, each then categorized according to size and color.

Beyond representation this body of work is also about real stuff, or shall I say stash? Tomaselli embeds in his surfaces actual pills (MDMA or ecstasy) and marijuana leaves along side swirls of cutout pictures of flora and fauna, though none so illicit are on display at the Modern.

—CHARISSA N. TERRANOVA

Focus: Fred Tomaselli

Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth

Through March 23