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Meet Patricia Van Dalen in Coral Gables



LOCAL STORIES

Today we'd like to introduce you to Patricia Van Dalen.



Patricia, can you briefly walk us through your story – how you started and how you got to where you are today.

I am a Miami-based visual artist born in Venezuela, with an extensive 35+ year career centered in abstract

art. I like to transform neutral spaces into unexpected spaces; to give joy to the eye; to remind us of the sublime, of the harmonious, of images that inspire in us feelings of happiness; all within a contemporary aesthetic, which enhances the visual and spatial experience that connects us with a place.

My interest in the social dimension of artistic production has often led me to incorporate art into public spaces and create many ephemeral site-specific works, mainly in educational and recreational institutions. Back in 2003, I created a large-scale installation at the Fairchild Tropical Botanic Garden (Coral Gables, FL), with 100,000 fluorescent marking flags on a field – a wonderful experience that started off the program “Art at Fairchild”. More recently, in 2014, I conceived an artwork specifically for the Center of Computational Sciences at the University of Miami, made out of motherboards from their previous servers, along with plastic lacings representing data processing. Also in 2014, I created an ephemeral installation for The Kampong Botanic Garden in Coconut Grove, inspired by all the travels made by explorer and botanist David Fairchild around the world in the early 1900’s.

I use a wide range of media in my work, including painting, collage, prints, drawing, and, more recently, assemblage, photograph, and video, as well as site-specific installations and the design of works incorporated into architecture, such as murals, stained-glass windows, and rugs.

I’m the author of the large-scale public art mural Jardín Lumínico, located in the Prados del Este highway in Caracas, Venezuela.

Currently, I lead my studio in beautiful downtown Coral Gables.

We're always bombarded by how great it is to pursue your passion, etc – but we've spoken with enough people to know that it's not always easy. Overall, would you say things have been easy for you?

Migrating to a new country entails going through many complex personal experiences, but this enormous change can also effect a real hardship on one's professional endeavors. Coming from Venezuela, a country where many years ago the arts were widely supported and sponsored by public and private institutions, it has been very difficult for me to feel the same kind of backing in this city. It can be hard to prove here, even when one has a long and successful experience working as an artist in public art, that one could very well create large-scale artworks for the Greater Miami. Many grants and calls-for-artists that are constantly being opened for Florida residents require one to have executed previous works in the State with six-figure budgets. How could one aspire to win one of these contests when most of my works were made in Venezuela?

However, some people have been opening their doors for me to exhibit my works; not only fellow Venezuelans who belong to the cultural and artistic realm in Miami, but also Miamians who enjoy working with newcomers to the city that have something unique to offer.

We'd love to hear more about your business.

After having had my studio in Wynwood for several years, I moved it to fantastic downtown Coral Gables. I come to my studio from 9 am to 6 pm on weekdays, and on some Saturday mornings. It is a private studio, not open to the public, but people can certainly visit me by requesting an appointment via email or over the phone. I create, design, and produce paintings, assemblage, projects for architectural spaces, and other kinds of artworks, and I'm always exploring visual language and media, preparing new bodies of work for up-coming exhibitions, and working on special commissions.

I also conduct art classes, color workshops, and visual education courses, in both my studio and other local cultural institutions. I love sharing purposeful creative activities with people who have the requisite sensitivity: activities such as learning how to see, how to really observe and enjoy the visual world.

What were you like growing up?

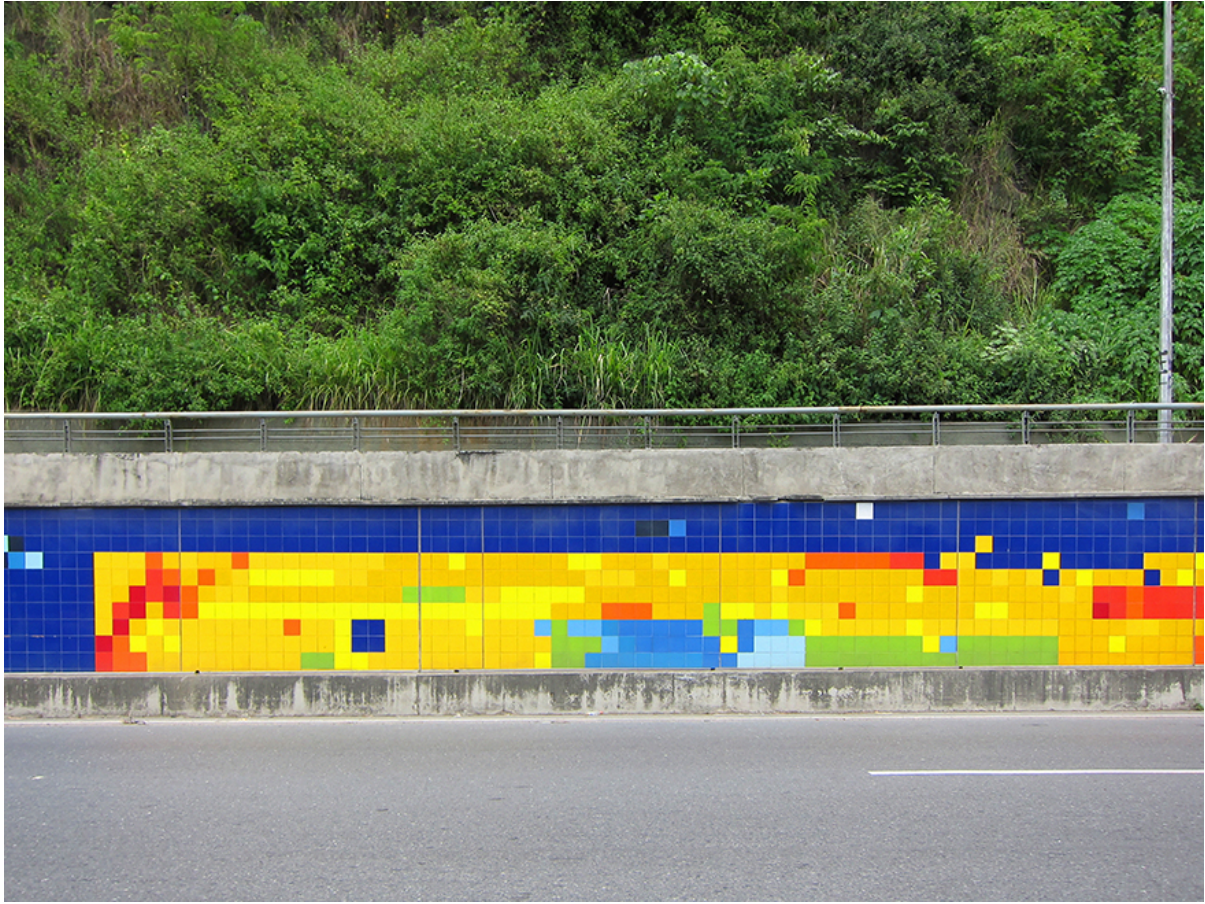
I grew up in Maracaibo, Venezuela, and also in Holland (albeit briefly). I then moved to Caracas, where I did my elementary education in a German school, and high school in a Venezuelan school. I then studied graphic design in the renowned Instituto de Diseño Fundación Neumann. Afterward, I lived several years in Paris, working in a visual education program for preschoolers, and

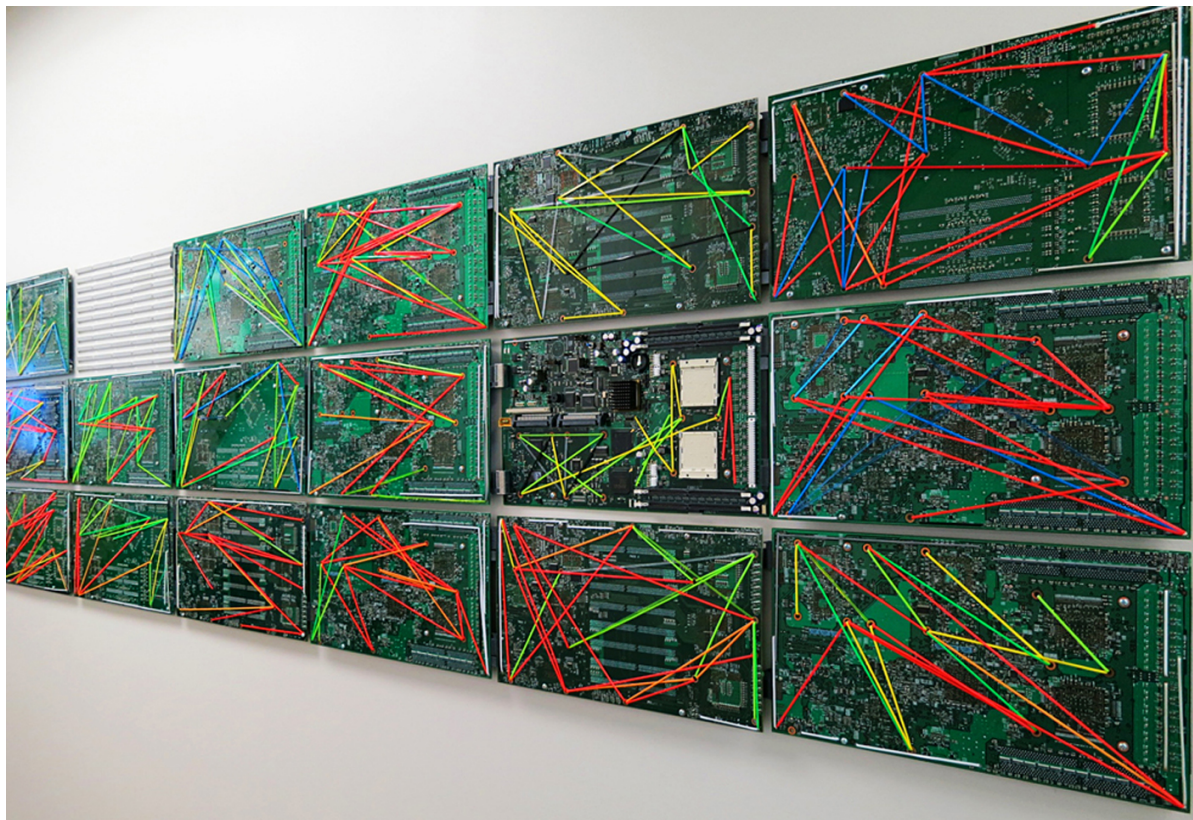
then I went back to Caracas, and, last but not least, I finally ended up moving to Miami.

Being the daughter of a Dutch book-seller, I was always surrounded by books and classical music. I thus have a special preference for instrumental music, and for shopping in bookstores. Working in Coral Gables gives me the splendid opportunity to visit four bookstores that are close to each other: Books & Books, Barnes & Noble, Altamira Libros, and Imago Art in Action, these last two with only books in Spanish.

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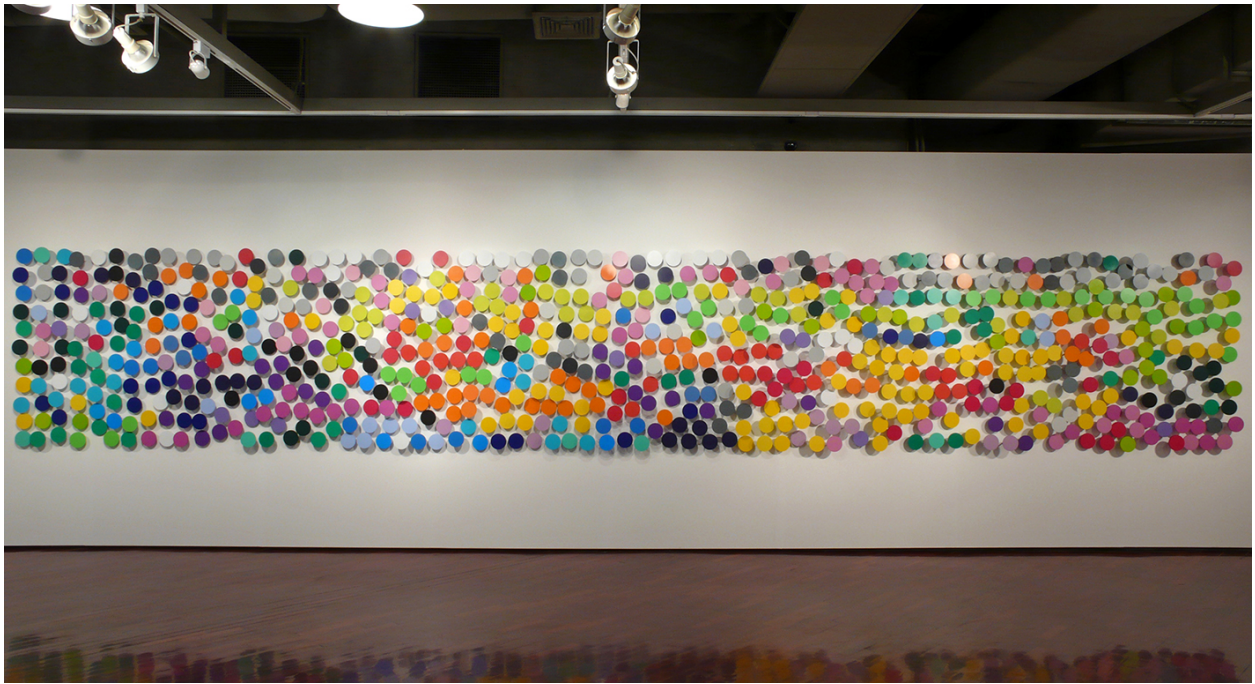
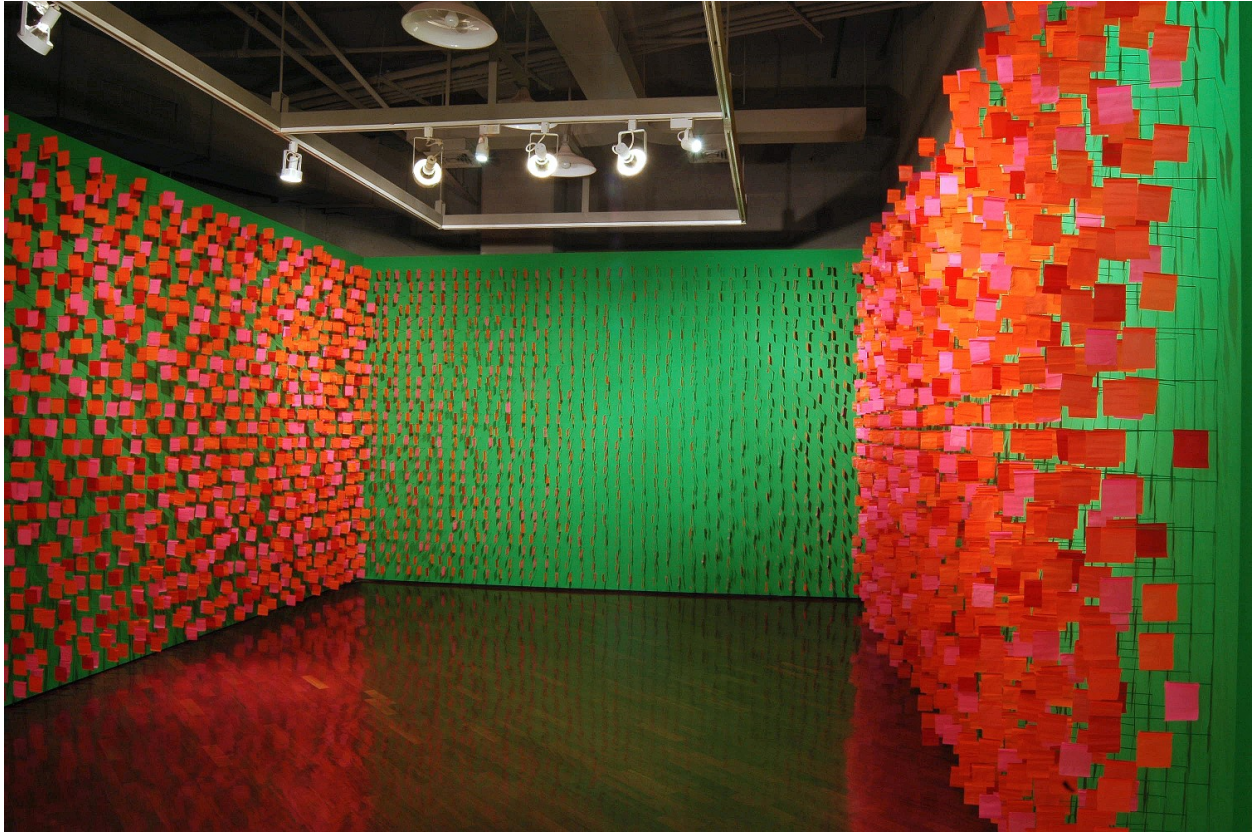








Image Credit:

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