



Summer
Lates



Every Saturday
until 10pm

+44(0)20 7009 2424

12th May 2016

PRESS RELEASE:

Newport Street Gallery to open Jeff Koons solo exhibition next week

'Summer Lates' will launch to coincide with the new show

Newport Street Gallery is pleased to present 'Now', a solo exhibition of work by American artist Jeff Koons (b. 1955), which opens to the public on Wednesday 18th May and runs until 16th October 2016.

Jeff Koons is widely considered to be one of the most significant artists to have emerged in the postwar era. Since the late 1970s, his diverse work has explored themes pertaining to taste, consumerism, mass culture, beauty, acceptance, and the role of the artist.

'Now' is the first major UK exhibition to be devoted to the artist since 'Jeff Koons: Popeye Series', at the Serpentine Gallery in 2009. Spanning thirty-five years of the artist's extraordinary career, 'Now' features over thirty paintings, works on paper and sculptures dating from 1979 to 2014. Drawn from Hirst's collection, a number of these works have never before been shown in the UK.

Tracing the development of the artist's radical reconfiguration of the readymade, the exhibition features one of Koons's earliest works, *Inflatable Flowers (Short White, Tall Purple)* (1979), a vinyl blow-up flower displayed on a mirrored floor tile. Signalling the conception of one of Koons's most enduring themes – the inflatable – it is here presented alongside a number of his iconic *Hoover* sculptures. Part of *The New* series (1980–1983), the wall-mounted *Hoovers* – in which immaculate, unused household appliances are displayed in fluorescent-lit, acrylic boxes – date from Koons's time working as a Wall Street commodities broker. Two of the *Hoovers*, which remain eternally pristine despite being outdated, were included in Koons's first solo exhibition, at New York's New Museum in 1980. Part of that installation – originally displayed in the museum's storefront windows – has been reassembled for this exhibition. For the artist, the readymade, whether in the form of a child's toy, Baroque sculpture or advertising billboard, provides "the most objective statement possible".

Having begun his career focusing on the status of the object, 'Now' demonstrates how Koons quickly embarked on his lifelong investigation into the means by which

objects are represented and communicated. With his sculptures cast in stainless steel, he returned to the inflatable; seductively replicating pre-existing objects in the gleaming, simulated opulence of the proletarian material. Employing cutting-edge technology, seemingly fragile, air-filled vinyl blow-ups and balloon animals are reproduced in stainless steel, sometimes rendered on the monumental scale of *Balloon Monkey (Blue)* (2006–2013), here exhibited in Newport Street's double-height gallery. The reflective surfaces of these sculptures serve to "constantly remind viewers of their existence", as Koons maintains, "it's all about you".

Koons's enduring ability to delight, fascinate and provoke is evident throughout this broad survey. Employing easily-identified images, he explores social mobility in the *Equilibrium* Nike posters, the ways alcohol is advertised to different demographics in *Luxury and Degradation*, and the evocative imagery of childhood toys represented in *Celebration*. Whilst with his *Made in Heaven* series – erotic scenes involving the artist and his then-wife Ilona Staller (aka 'La Cicciolina') – he investigates the stigma and shame that inheres in contemporary conceptions of sexuality, succeeding in transforming the erotic into a study of: "the biological eternal... the preservation of life, the continuation of life".

Summarised by curator and critic Norman Rosenthal as "manifestations of a joyful acceptance of American culture", Koons's work – which here fills Newport Street's six, expansive galleries – challenges and teases in equal measure, reflecting as much on the profundities of our existence as the banalities of daily life.

To coincide with the exhibition, Newport Street Gallery will launch its new 'Summer Lates' opening hours, which will see the gallery remaining open until 10pm every Saturday (from 21st May).

Notes to editors

Jeff Koons was born in York, Pennsylvania, in 1955. He studied at the Maryland Institute College of Art in Baltimore and the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. He received a BFA from the Maryland Institute College of Art in 1976. Since his first solo exhibition in 1980, Koons's work has been shown in major galleries and institutions throughout the world. A full survey of Koons's career was the subject of a major exhibition at the Whitney Museum of American Art in New York, which travelled to the Centre Pompidou in Paris and to the Guggenheim Museum Bilbao. Koons lives and works in New York City.

Hirst first saw Koons's work – which he has been collecting for twelve years – in the 1987–1988 group exhibition 'New York Art Now', presented at the Saatchi Gallery during Hirst's second year at Goldsmiths college.

Newport Street Gallery opened in Vauxhall, south London, in October 2015. Spanning five buildings, the gallery presents solo or group exhibitions of work drawn from Damien Hirst's extensive art collection, which he has been building since the late 1980s. Hirst's interest in curating dates back to the beginning of his artistic career and his organisation of the groundbreaking 'Freeze' exhibition in south London in 1988. On the opening of the gallery, Hirst said: "I've always loved art and art deserves to be shown in great spaces, so I've always dreamed of having my own gallery where I can exhibit work by the artists I love. I believe art should be experienced by as many people as possible and I've felt guilty owning work that is stored away in boxes where no one can see it, so having a space where I can put on shows from the collection is a dream come true."

For media enquiries about Newport Street Gallery please contact:

+44(0)20 7009 2424 or email

info@newportstreetgallery.com

Newport Street Gallery

Newport Street

London

SE11 6AJ

Opening times:

Tuesday – Sunday 10am – 6pm

Saturday - 10am – 10pm

Free entry

Newport Street Gallery is open on Bank Holidays. Please see website for details.

www.newportstreetgallery.com

<http://www.jeffkoons.com>

For updates follow us on

Twitter [@NPSGallery](https://twitter.com/NPSGallery)

Facebook [NPSGallery](https://www.facebook.com/NPSGallery)

Instagram [Newportstreetgallery_london](https://www.instagram.com/newportstreetgallery_london)