

ARTIST ROOMS

TATE



SUPPORTED BY THE

ArtFund



PRESS VIEW: 11.30 am – 1.00 pm, 18 March 2011

ARTIST ROOMS: Jeff Koons

19 March – 3 July 2011

Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art, 75 Belford Road, Edinburgh, EH4 3DR

Telephone 0131 6246 6200

www.nationalgalleries.org

Admission free

One of the most highly acclaimed and internationally successful artists working today will be the focus of a new display at the Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art this spring. *ARTIST ROOMS: Jeff Koons* will bring together a selection of 18 major works, in a variety of media, charting the American artist's career from the early 1980s until 2003. The works on display will be taken from ARTIST ROOMS, a collection of modern and contemporary art held by Tate and National Galleries of Scotland for the nation.

Following the successes of 2009 and 2010, 21 museums and galleries across the UK (including 17 venues outside of London and Edinburgh) in 2011 will be showing ARTIST ROOMS exhibitions and displays from the collection assembled by the art collector and curator, Anthony d'Offay. ARTIST ROOMS is owned jointly by Tate and National Galleries of Scotland and was established through The d'Offay Donation in 2008, with the assistance of the National Heritage Memorial Fund, the Art Fund and the Scottish and British Governments. ARTIST ROOMS is being shared with galleries and museums throughout the UK thanks to the support of the Art Fund - the fundraising charity for works of art - and the Scottish Government. ARTIST ROOMS On Tour with the Art Fund has been devised to enable this collection to reach and inspire new audiences across the country, particularly young people.

Among the highlights of *ARTIST ROOMS: Jeff Koons* will be key examples from some of the artist's most important and iconic series of works, including *The New* (which explores the seductive allure of pristine consumer goods), and *Made in Heaven* (a series of provocative images and sculptures featuring Koons and his former wife, the Italian politician and adult film-star Ilona Staller). The display will also feature works from the landmark series *Banality*, for which Koons is perhaps most renowned. These will include two large-scale masterpieces

Winter Bears (1988), as well as *Bear and Policeman* (1988), an additional loan from the collection of the Kunstmuseum Wolfsburg in Germany.

Jeff Koons was born in York, Pennsylvania in 1955, and moved to New York in the mid-1970s, having studied art and design in Baltimore and Chicago. Though he is now almost unrivalled in terms of commercial success, the artist famously supported himself during his early career by working as a commodities broker, an experience which has informed the way his work engages with the commercialism and materialism of our society.

Koons made a significant impact on the New York art scene with *The New*, an installation of ready-made household objects first shown in 1980. These works, such as *New Hoover Convertibles, Green, Red, Brown, New Shelton Wet/Dry 10 Gallon Displaced Doubledecker* (1981-7), which will be shown here, featured familiar consumer goods (vacuum cleaners, in this instance) displayed as they might appear in a shop or perhaps a museum, enshrined within a glass case. This renders them obsolete as functioning objects, but elevates them to a state of perpetual perfection, their pristine 'new-ness' being the essence of their magnetic appeal. *Encased - Four Rows* (1983-93), which will also appear in the display, is one of a number of works for which Koons used basketballs as a powerful symbol of aspiration in the USA.

Using commonplace, ready-made objects, Koons consciously referred to the work of the pioneer conceptual artist Marcel Duchamp (1887-1968), calling into question the established values of the art world, and exploring ideas of culture and taste. For the *Banality* series, Koons developed this approach, commissioning specialist craftsmen to reproduce inexpensive toys, dolls and figurines in polychromed wood and porcelain. Like *Bear and Policeman, Winter Bears* was carved by highly skilled Bavarian woodcarvers, using centuries-old techniques to recreate a miniature child's ornament on a disconcertingly large scale.

Koons also used traditional craftsmen to create the sculptures in glass and marble, such the iconic *Bourgeois Bust*, which appeared in his 1991 exhibition *Made in Heaven*. The installation included large-format photographs of Koons and Staller (also known as La Cicciolina), locked in a series of carefully staged (and sometimes intimate) embraces, including one billboard-sized image, which will form a dramatic centrepiece to the display here.

With the *Easyfun* mirrors series of 1999, Koons continued to evolve a visual vocabulary drawn from popular imagery, with an instant, simple appeal. Nine of these immaculately polished works, which are based on the silhouettes of cartoon animals, are held in ARTIST ROOMS, representing the largest public holding of this aspect of the artist's output. The mirrors' highly-coloured surfaces are produced by combining a complex structure of crystal glass, coloured plastic interlayer, mirrored glass and stainless steel.

The most recent work in the display, *Caterpillar Chains* (2003), revives the artist's interest in inflatable toys (a prominent feature in some of his earlier work). The caterpillar in question is an aluminium cast of a child's pool toy, painstakingly painted in bright colours so that it is barely distinguishable from the plastic original. The work comes from the *Popeye* series, in which Koons combined cast inflatables, somewhat incongruously, with readymade objects: here the caterpillar is suspended, or perhaps constrained by vibrant red chains.

To find out more information about ARTIST ROOMS On Tour please visit www.artfund.org/artistrooms. To see the full ARTIST ROOMS collection please visit www.tate.org.uk/artistrooms and www.nationalgalleries.org/artistrooms

For further information and images, please call the Press Office on 0131 624 6247/ 325/ 332/ 314

pressinfo@nationalgalleries.org
www.nationalgalleries.org

-ENDS-

Notes to editors

The Art Fund is the fundraising charity for works of art and plays a major part in enriching the range, quality and understanding of art in the UK. It campaigns, fundraises and gives money to museums and galleries to buy and show art, and promotes its enjoyment through its events and membership scheme. The Art Fund is funded by its art-loving and museum-going members and supporters who believe that great art should be for everyone to enjoy. Find out more at www.artfund.org. Media contact | 020 7225 4888 | media@artfund.org