

GAGOSIAN GALLERY

23 March 2007

PRESS RELEASE
GAGOSIAN GALLERY
6-24 BRITANNIA STREET
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GALLERY HOURS:

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Tue – Sat: 10:00am– 6:00pm



JEFF KOONS: *Hulk Elvis*

Monday, 4 June – Wednesday, 27 July 2007

Opening reception for the artist: Monday, 18 June, from 5 to 7pm

'Hulk Elvis represents for me both Western and Eastern culture, a sense of a guardian, a protector, that at the same time is capable of bringing the house down'

--Jeff Koons

Gagosian Gallery is pleased to announce Jeff Koons's new series of paintings, *Hulk Elvis*. These large paintings burst with energy and precision yet mystify with their complex permutations and combinations of figurative and abstract elements. A charged mix of inflatable monkeys, geishas, birds, The Incredible Hulk, and The Liberty Bell jostle against realistically rendered landscapes, gestural paintings, steam engines and horse-drawn carriages, negative silhouettes, and underlying dot screens.

In these paintings, whose titles string together dominant compositional elements – *Hulk Elvis I, Monkey Train, Geisha, Landscape (Waterfall), Girl (Dots)* – the exuberance of image and texture is rendered, paradoxically, with an uncanny level of exactitude into a wealth of smooth, vivid detail. Images are manipulated and interwoven into volatile palimpsests of color and form. In these spectacular pictorial inventions – which reject any attempt by the eye to find a resting place – brightly colored silhouettes slice through multiple layers, contours of images surface rhythmically across the field of vision, and forms loom and recede in the swirling delirium of color and line.

From the outset of his controversial career, Koons turned the traditional notion of the work of art and its context inside out. Focusing on unexpected yet banal objects as models for his work, from vacuum cleaners and inflatable flowers to novelty drink caddies, china figurines, and children's toys, he eschewed typical standards of 'good taste' in art, instead embracing what he perceives as conventional middle-class values in order to expose the vulnerabilities of aesthetic hierarchies and value systems. Koons's declared strategies are to make art beautiful, to strive for objectivity, to give back the familiar, and to reflect, and thus empower, the viewer. Moving through various conceptual constructs including the new, the banal and the heavenly, his work has evolved from its literal, deadpan beginnings into visceral manifestations that dazzle the eye and confound the senses.

Jeff Koons was born in 1955 in York, PA. He received his B.F.A. at the Maryland Institute College of Art in Baltimore and studied at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. His work has been widely exhibited internationally in solo and group exhibitions. Recent solo shows include the Deutsche Guggenheim, Berlin (2000), Kunsthaus Bregenz (2001), the Museo Archeologico Nazionale di Napoli (2003) and the Astrup Fearnley Museum of Modern Art, Oslo (2004), which traveled to the Helsinki City Art Museum (2005). Koons lives and works in New York City.

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