

GAGOSIAN GALLERY

VANITY FAIR

**BODY OF WORK**  
Jeff Koons in the gym of his studio, in New York City's Chelsea neighborhood. He works out every day around noon, then eats a lean lunch.

# Jeff Koon

Getting a massive retrospective this month at the Whitney, preparing to install his balloon sculptures at the Louvre, lecturing at the Frick—has Jeff Koons, taboo-busting rebel, become a pillar of the art establishment? With a look back at the simultaneous implosion of Koons's career and personal life in the 1990s, INGRID SISCHY examines the creative risks that power his record-breaking prices and pop-culture supremacy



# s Is Back!

SET DESIGN BY MARY HOWARD STUDIO;  
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f the walls at Manhattan's Frick Collection could talk, they would have been uttering tiny gasps of shock and awe this spring at a lecture given by Jeff Koons for a small, mostly professional-art-world crowd. Koons was sharing his ruminations on the Renaissance and Baroque bronzes from the Hill Collection then on view in the galleries, and it was one of the artist's classic performances: no opportunity was missed to point out breasts, testicles, and phalluses, both in the bronzes and in his own work. This way of seeing and talking about art is his specialty, and the crowd ate it up, many of them getting the droll underlying humor of the situation as a deadpan Koons busted taboos in snootsville. But not everyone was happy about it. The very idea of Koons's being invited to speak at this old-world institution apparently put someone's nose out of joint enough that he or she had sent the museum postcards featuring drawings of poop.

The Frick isn't the only important institution to embrace Koons. The Whitney Museum plans a retrospective, curated by Scott Rothkopf, opening to the public on June 27. It will be historic in many ways. Spreading out just over 27,000 square feet—in all the museum's

exhibition spaces save the fifth floor, which holds selections from the permanent collection—it will be the biggest show devoted to a single artist that the Whitney has ever done. Furthermore, it will be the last show, for now at least, that the Whitney will put on in its current home—Marcel Breuer's bold, unconventional, gray granite-and-concrete modernist structure at 75th Street and Madison Avenue. After the Koons exhibition, the museum will reopen downtown, in spring 2015, in a much larger space designed by Renzo Piano, smack at the southern end of the High Line, in the Meatpacking District. The museum, which can't afford to erect a new building and keep the old one operating at full throttle, has leased the Breuer building for eight years, with an option to extend, to the Metropolitan Museum of Art, which has never had a sympathetic exhibition space for its collection of 20th- and 21st-century works. Now it does.

First, though, the prospect of the Koons show is revving things up in the art world. "Jeff is the Warhol of his time," proclaims Adam Weinberg, the Whitney's director. The exhibition's organizer, Rothkopf, adds, "We didn't want to leave the building looking backwards and being nostalgic, but we wanted something very bold that was new for the Whitney and Jeff and New York."

It is a banner year for Koons in general. *Split-Rocker*, 2000, the artist's second live-flower sculpture, will be shown in New York for the first time, at Rockefeller Center, under the auspices of the Gagosian Gallery and the Public Art Fund, to coincide with the Whitney show. With its references to Picasso's Cubism, to my eyes it is even more multi-layered and pleasurable than Koons's other mega-hit *Puppy*—which also has its own soil and internal irrigation system to take care of the flowers. Mean-



#### STUDIO SYSTEM

The painting section of Koons's studio, where assistants work on canvases for his "Antiquity" series. Paintings are stippled in sections and then hand-painted. To achieve his vision, Koons employs 128 people at his studio: 64 in the painting department, 44 in the sculpture department, 10 in the digital department, and 10 in administration. That's to say nothing of the specialists, fabricators, and institutions he consults, including most recently M.I.T.'s Center for Bits and Atoms, led by Neil Gershenfeld.

while, at the Louvre, in January 2015, Koons will install a selection of his large-scale balloon sculptures, including *Balloon Rabbit*, *Balloon Swan*, and *Balloon Monkey*, in the 19th-century galleries.

The last time I wrote about Koons for this magazine, in 2001, he was in a very different place, having just gone to hell and back, not only in the effort to pull off a fiercely ambitious project, "Celebration," which he had begun in 1993, but in his personal life as well. He'd basically lost everything except his faith in his art. At the time, I thought how unruffled Koons was, how most people would have been hysterical in his situation. But as Gary McCraw, Koons's loyal right-hand man, says, "Jeff does not like being stuck—he figures out what needs to change." Koons's cool paid off. He extricated himself from a number of business relationships that clearly weren't working and returned to his original home at the Sonnabend Gallery. He took a detour from the struggle to complete his "Celebration" sculptures and paintings, and created several new series, including a couple of painting shows and animal-shaped reflecting wall reliefs ("Easyfun" and "Easyfun-Ethereal"). Skip ahead a dozen or so years, to today, and the change in Koons's circumstances is almost beyond belief. He is a superstar for a consortium of three powerful galleries—Gagosian, David Zwirner, and Sonnabend—each of which works with him independently, and, astonishing as it may sound, his earlier high prices now sound like flat-out bargains. A few examples of his auction sales prices, totaling \$177 million over the past year: \$28.2 million for the mirror-polished stainless-steel *Popeye*,

2009–11; \$33.8 million for the stainless-steel *Jim Beam—J.B. Turner Train*, 1986; \$58.4 million for *Balloon Dog (Orange)*, 1994–2000, the highest price ever paid for a work by a living artist.

How Koons managed to go from obscurity to white-hot to near ruin and then back again to the pinnacle is a classic American tale of self-invention, ingenuity, and unbreakable will, not to mention a genius for salesmanship and spin.

The artist comes by his talent for salesmanship honestly. When I visited him this spring at his farm, in south-central Pennsylvania (which had once been owned by his maternal grandparents, Nell and Ralph Sitler, and which he bought back in 2005, as a country place for his family), Koons took me to the cemetery in nearby East Prospect, where his mother's side of the family is buried. Parked in front of a row of headstones with the name "Sitler" carved into them, Koons read the first names and told me what each of his male relatives had done. Most were merchants. His uncle Carl Sitler had a cigar business; his uncle Roy Sitler owned the general store; and on it went. The artist's father, Henry Koons, was an interior decorator whose business catered to the most affluent citizens of York, which back then was thriving as a small industrial hub.

The young Koons fit right in. In addition to helping his dad—even making paintings that would end up in his furniture store—he loved selling ribbons and bows and gift wrap door-to-door and also Cokes at the local golf course. "Everyone else would sell Kool-Aid, but I would sell Coca-Cola in a really nice jug," Koons recalls. "I would

VEILED REFERENCE

Koons alongside  
an unfinished sculpture,  
*Gazing Ball (Farnese  
Hercules)*, 2013.

“HE HAS TO CONVINCE

lay out a towel and stack up all my cups, and really try to make it a nice, hygienic experience.” (The artist has a sensitivity to hygiene and odors that is almost comical.)

Koons’s early art heroes were those who had personal meaning to him, such as Salvador Dalí, whose work he knew from a book his parents had given him, his first art book. While at art school in Baltimore, Koons tracked down Dalí at the St. Regis hotel, in New York, and the next thing you know they had a memorable date—the boy who looked like he had popped off the back of a cereal box (he still does) and the man who defined Euro-decadence. The subsequent nods in his work to Dalí’s famous mustache are fun to pick out.

Similarly, Koons was so knocked out by a show of Jim Nutt’s paintings at the Whitney in 1974 that he decided to spend his senior year at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, in the city where Nutt belonged to a loosely connected collective of artists known as the Chicago Imagists. There, Koons ended up working as a studio assistant for one of the key Imagists, Ed Paschke, whose nightmare palette and netherworld iconography still pack a punch. Paschke recalled how Koons was such a dedicated assistant that his hands would bleed from trying to stretch the canvases to be perfectly taut.

Once he made it to New York, Koons landed the perfect, for him, position at the Museum of Modern Art, manning the membership desk. I was working at MoMA back then, too, on a National Endowment for the Arts fellowship in photography, and I often spied him in the lobby in his eye-catching outfits and attention-getting accessories, such as paper bibs, double ties, and store-bought inflatable flowers around his neck. These shenanigans made for some hilarious anecdotes, such as when the museum’s then director, Richard Oldenburg, politely asked Koons to pull a Houdini and disappear till the coast was clear. Oldenburg was acting at the behest of William Rubin, the humorless head of the painting-and-sculpture department, who was bringing a delegation from Russia, as Koons remembers it; Rubin was hoping they would help fund an exhibition or two, and he worried that Koons’s antics might be a turnoff. (I recounted this story to the architect Annabelle Selldorf, who has worked with Koons, and she observed, laughing, that those collectors are now the ones buying his work.)

### Striving Artist

**K**oons’s job at MoMA gave him the opportunity to immerse himself in the history of modernism, in particular the ideas of Marcel Duchamp, who changed art history by showing how everyday objects, or “readymades,” could be elevated into the realm of art, depending on context. Duchamp’s theories were a revelation to Koons. While at MoMA he started to fool around with a bunch of cheap inflatables, blowups of flowers and bunnies, riffing on Duchamp’s idea of readymades and propping them against mirrors in his apartment. “The sexual power of the imagery was so intoxicating to me visually that I had to have a drink,” he remembers. “I went to Slugger Ann’s, Jackie Curtis’s grandmother’s bar.”

The reference to Curtis ties Koons to the last true avant-garde—a pedigree the artist likes. Curtis, who refused to be called a drag queen, was a pioneer of the L.G.B.T. movement and, like Candy Darling, was made famous by Warhol. Koons clearly relishes the fact that he and Warhol are often discussed in the same breath these days, but in fact, as artists and personalities, they couldn’t be more different. Warhol

had a double whammy of an outsider perspective: the American son of Slovak immigrants, he was gay at a time when it was a very different proposition from what it is today. Koons, on the other hand, grew up in the embrace of community, with a secure sense of belonging. Warhol liked to have young folks around him at the Factory, but he didn’t want to actually spawn any. Koons has enough kids of his own (eight) to start a touring company of *The Sound of Music*. Warhol was almost Zen in his grasp of the light touch in making his artworks and getting them out into the world. Koons goes through a ring of fire for each work, so much so that his finished output is actually quite slim. “We average 6.75 paintings and 15 to 20 sculptures a year,” he told me. (He is always very exact.) Warhol was practically monosyllabic with art critics, dealers, and collectors. Koons is the opposite.

Actually, if there is anyone the artist seems to be inspired by at this point in his life, it is Picasso, whom Koons refers to a lot. Koons, at 59, has already begun a strict exercise-and-diet regimen so that he will have a shot at working undiminished into his 80s, as Picasso did. He hits his upstairs gym every day at around noon when he is in the studio, then eats a lean lunch. For the rest of the afternoon he dips into an assortment of nuts, cereals, fresh vegetables, and Zone bars. Once in a while he’ll apologize for an odor if he’s eating broccoli.

What Warhol and Koons do have in common, though, is an uncanny ability to nail an image or an object so that it catches the *Zeitgeist*. The first time Koons landed on such an idea was in 1979, around the time he left MoMA. He had been experimenting with kitchen appliances, such as toasters, refrigerators, and deep fryers, attaching them to fluorescent-light tubes. These gave way to the artist’s first fully realized series, “The New,” which included never used vacuum cleaners and rug shampooers, often presented in clear Plexiglas vitrines and illuminated by fluorescent lights. “I thought of them as eternal-virgin-type situations,” says Koons.

By then he was selling mutual funds to get by. The artworks got some buzz in the downtown art community, and for a minute Koons was taken on by the dealer of the moment, Mary Boone. As he whispered to trusted fellow artists, he was excited to become a “Booney,” but it didn’t work out in the end. Another dealer returned a vacuum-cleaner piece. Broke and heartbroken, Koons called a time-out and spent six months or so with his parents, who had moved to Florida, where he saved money from a job as a political canvasser.

**W**hat came next, upon his return to New York, was the game changer: his “Equilibrium” series. He was working once again in the high-pressure world of finance, this time trading commodities, but by night he was cooking up what would turn out to be his first coup.

Involving a dark, Nietzschean worldview, it was almost the opposite of the cheerful Koonsian iconography people have grown accustomed to. Take two works from 1985: a cast-bronze scuba apparatus, which he called *Aqualung*, and a bronze *Lifeboat*. It’s immediately obvious they aren’t going to save anyone. Instead they’ll take you down.

The “Equilibrium” works were exhibited in 1985 in Koons’s first solo show, at International with Monument, a short-lived, artist-run gallery in the East Village. Dakis Joannou, a Greek collector, who would become an important champion of the artist’s, was stunned when he saw the show. “I was so intrigued with the basketball piece, *One Ball Total Equilibrium Tank*,” he remembers. “I wanted to buy

EXTREMELY WEALTHY PEOPLE . . . TO BUY INTO THE DREAM.”

# “A FRIEND TOLD ME, ‘JEFF...

**FERTILE MIND**  
Koons and his wife, Justine, with their children at their Pennsylvania farmhouse, which once belonged to his grandparents. When discussing his art and his life, a favorite word of Koons's is “biology.”

PULL YOURSELF TOGETHER AND GET ON WITH YOUR LIFE.”



that piece.” The now iconic works of single or multiple basketballs in fishtanks had taken countless experiments and many phone calls to scientists, including Nobel Prize winner Dr. Richard P. Feynman, who encouraged Koons to work out the right proportion of distilled and saline water so that the basketballs would neither rise nor sink. Joannou asked to meet the artist. “He was serious,” says Joannou. “He had depth. He had vision. He had an enormous world of his own that he had not even started exploring yet.” (Joannou scooped up the work for \$2,700.)

The Whitney exhibition will have prime examples from the Koons hit parade, from his earliest works to his most recent, including stainless-steel objects from both the “Luxury and Degradation” series (a *Travel Bar*, the *Jim Beam–J.B. Turner Train*, etc.) and the “Statuary” series, which featured Koons’s most critically admired work, *Rabbit*, 1986. This mirror-polished, enigmatic, silver stainless-steel bunny is the piece that won over previously unconvinced curators, art historians, and critics, who saw it as a dazzling contemporary update of a broad range of iconography, from Playboy bunnies to Brancusi’s soaring forms.

But Koons aspires to appeal not just to the cognoscenti. Nowhere was this more obvious than in his “Banality” series, created mostly in traditional porcelain and wood in workshops in Italy and Germany in the late 80s. The works are a virtual populist paradise that runs the gamut from St. John the Baptist to an all-gold-and-white Michael Jackson, cradling his pet monkey. The springboard for the work was found common objects and popular souvenirs, to which Koons then brought his art wand. Plenty of people checked out these artworks at the Sonnabend Gallery, where the artist had finally found a home. Soon there would be even more signs that he might one day reach his goal, which he once described rather immodestly as wanting to create the art equivalent of what the Beatles had done.

### Heaven Couldn’t Wait

**K**oons always captures the *Zeitgeist*, for better or for worse, so there is a perfect logic to the “Made in Heaven” series, which he exhibited at Sonnabend in the fall of 1991, a period in which sex went from under the counter to center stage because of AIDS. What Koons did was the heterosexual equivalent of Robert Mapplethorpe’s taboo-busting images of men having sex together—in fact, Koons’s paintings and sculptures, created out of wood, marble, glass, and canvases photomechanically printed with oil inks, include some of the most graphic sexual imagery ever produced in Western art that went public. It’s impossible to imagine this work without its leading lady, Ilona Staller, better known as La Cicciolina (translated as the “little dumpling”), an only-in-Italy personage, whom Koons met after he saw her picture in a magazine as a model. Almost immediately they got up close and personal. The Hungarian-born Staller—a former porn star/erotic-video icon/politician—has so far been Koons’s only human readymade, and, being human, she had issues.

The paintings Koons created of the two of them feature penetration, both anal and vaginal, and liberal amounts of semen. Discussing one of the most no-holes-barred pictures, Koons says, “What I really like about it are the pimples on Ilona’s ass. The confidence to reveal one’s ass like that. That’s like my reference to Courbet’s *The Origin of the World*.” And he’s not kidding.

For a while their life imitated art, and vice versa. The couple fell in love and, after a wedding in Budapest and about a year in Munich, where Koons oversaw production of his “Made in Heaven” project, they came back to New York. “My dad said that he thought it was crazy, but he was very accepting,” recalls Koons. Dad wasn’t the only one who thought it was loony.

Not surprisingly, the “Made in Heaven” exhibition was extremely popular with a curious public and hungry media, but it was basically a bomb with the art establishment, many of whose members thought that Koons had committed career suicide. Selldorf remembers how shocking the work seemed at the time. “One time I was all alone in the studio and three of the gigantic ‘penetration’ paintings were there,” she says. “I was staring at these paintings thinking, Holy Mother of God!” It was no picnic to sell the work, which had been expensive to produce, and it didn’t help that the recession of the early 90s had people in a panic. Sonnabend was having trouble keeping up with Koons’s needs, and something which had previously seemed unimaginable happened: Koons and Sonnabend parted ways. Antonio Homem, who ran the gallery with Ileana Sonnabend for some 40 years until Sonnabend’s death and who now owns it, remembers, “It was a very difficult moment. Even though Ileana and [her husband] Michael had a huge collection, they always lived from one day to the other. . . . The great financial problem for us was to fabricate all the ‘Made in Heaven’ pieces beforehand, which were very expensive to produce. Jeff wanted all of the editions to be made right from the beginning. I explained to him that we were unable to continue. He felt that this was a betrayal and that we didn’t believe in him, and therefore didn’t want to finance his work. He took it very badly. We had no wish to betray him. It was very sad for all of us.”

**T**oday this work is finally getting its due. Happily, Koons couldn’t destroy as much of it as he tried to—because it was so well constructed. (The Whitney will include some of it—with the usual not-for-minors warning.)

“‘Made in Heaven’ is just mind-blowing,” says Dan Colen, one of the most talented artists of the generation that came after Koons. “It was a border-less, boundary-less body of work. There was no separation between the artist’s life and his work. What he did is beyond Duchamp, beyond Warhol, beyond the readymade.” Some might say it was also beyond reason and beyond the market, but this is not a guy who compromises his art, ever. Homem sums it up: “Jeff would throw me out of the window for his art, but he would throw himself out the window with me, as well, without a second thought. He is the most romantic artist I ever met.”

By now the head-spinning details of the Koons-Staller affair are art-world legend. In a nutshell, Staller wanted to keep her X-rated porn-star job, and Koons wanted her to stick to their marriage vows. To make matters more complicated, the couple had a son, Ludwig, in October 1992. After Maria Callas-worthy drama, Staller blindsided Koons by outsmarting one of the bodyguards whom Koons had hired to watch her, and she left for Rome with Ludwig. Koons spent more than a decade and millions of dollars trying to get his son back, to no avail. He would fly to Rome to see Ludwig, but once he was there the visits would usually fall through. He was basically shut out of his son’s life. So he poured his emotions into his “Celebration” series, begun in 1993, as a way to tell his son just how much his father was miss-

# “WHAT KOONS DID IS BEYOND

ing him. A massive sculpture of a wide-eyed *Cat on a Clothesline*. A painting of *Building Blocks*. A sculpture of a giant stainless-steel gold *Hanging Heart* suspended by magenta stainless-steel ribbons. A monumental stainless-steel *Balloon Dog*, or modern-day Trojan horse. The simplicity of these works, and others like them, belies the complexity of executing them according to Koons's high expectations and uncompromising standards. The production costs of the art and the legal costs of trying to bring back Ludwig nearly bankrupted the artist.

Eventually Koons started to rebuild his life. "A friend told me, 'Jeff, look, it's over,'" he recalls. "'You did everything you can. Stop this, and pull yourself together and get on with your life.' I lost everything." He never gave up on Ludwig, who is now 21, and to try to help other children, he got involved with the International Centre for Missing & Exploited Children, and together they later formed the

Koons Family Institute on International Law & Policy. At a certain point Koons was re-united with his daughter Shannon, who'd been born when Koons was in college and put up for adoption; they now have a close relationship. In 2002 he married Justine Wheeler, an artist and former assistant in his studio. Today pictures of their own kids along with those of Ludwig and Shannon dot the Koons households.

**A**t the height of his crisis Koons's funding was depleted, and over time he had to let go of more than 70 assistants. Furthermore, in 1999, the I.R.S. filed a \$3 million tax lien. On many days Koons, his studio manager McCraw, and Wheeler, who was then becoming closer to the artist, had the studio to themselves. Their strategy for saving "Celebration" ultimately worked. "One big problem at the beginning was that Jeff would start making a work without really having a clear idea of how he could complete it," explains Homem. "Problems would occur in which everything would stop. Although his pieces still take years to make, fortunately there is less of that." Eventually, thanks to dogged belief, a new model of working (not to mention forces of nature like Gagosian and Sonnabend), and a lot of problem solving, the "Celebration" works slowly began to see the light of day.

A fundamental problem with the "Celebration" series was that the fabricating processes and the technology had not caught up with Koons's visions. These

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DUCHAMP, BEYOND WARHOL."



CONTINUED FROM PAGE 95 evolving technologies are so sophisticated and so much a part of the work that the Whitney devotes an entire chapter to them, written by Michelle Kuo, the editor of *Artforum*, in the catalogue for the show. Reading about the CT scans, structured-light scanning, volumetric data, customized software, and personalization of fabrication technologies, I started to understand why all those people are needed in Koons's studio. Most days there are 128 of them going at it, some doing just what Michelangelo's assistants did, such as mixing colors, while others seem to be doing lab work for advanced degrees in radiology.

Such a huge operation, combined with the achievement of perfection in the work, helps to explain why Koons's art costs so much to produce, and also what Koons has to do to pull it off. Barbara Kruger, the artist whose unsentimental pronouncements have been cutting to the chase about the art world for decades, says "Oh boy" when I call to discuss Koons, whom she has known since they both were starting out in New York. She needed to think about it and later wrote me: "Jeff is like the man who fell to earth, who, in this grotesque time of art flip-page and speculative mania, is either the icing on the cake or some kind of Piketty-esque harbinger of the return of Brecht's 'making strange.' Or a glitteringly bent version of that alienated vision. He brings the cake and lets them eat it." Kruger's reference to Thomas Piketty, the French economist whose book on the current chasm between the very rich and the very poor has become a cultural touchstone, is part of the whole picture; this social reality is what one can't help thinking about when one hears about the prices of contemporary art today, especially the sums that Koons's works are fetching. The odd thing, as many who know

Koons, including Kruger, will say, is that money doesn't interest him. He has three very personal luxuries: his home in New York City, the farm, and his collection of older art, which includes Magrittes, Courbets, and Manets. The farm, now expanded from 40 acres to approximately 800, is almost a Koonsian artwork. The buildings are painted in heritage red, yellow, and white in the full-on tradition of the area. In the main house, historic wallpapers, the patterns shifting from room to room, give the feeling of a kaleidoscope. But this farm is very much a private retreat for the family.

In Koons's public life there is no showy "I am rich" stuff. Money is mostly a means to an end for him to create his art. What he does need is wealthy patrons. Rothkopf, whose retrospective is blessedly clear-eyed, puts it this way: "If it is going to cost several million dollars to produce new work, he has got to marshal the resources from wealthy patrons to produce this thing. He has to convince extremely wealthy people, via art dealers, to buy into the dream of this perfect object."

While Koons has continued to explore popular imagery—such as the Hulk and Popeye (whose spinach he equates with art's transformative power)—he has also been producing other work in the last few years, both paintings and sculptures, that obviously draw on his love of antiquity and classical art. For last year's knockout show, "Gazing Ball," at the David Zwirner gallery—the announcement of which temporarily caused the art-world gossips to venture that he was leaving Gagosian, which wasn't true—he collaborated with the Louvre's plaster workshop, outside of Paris, the Staatliche Museen's Gipsformerei, in Berlin, and others. An expert in stone and casting at the Metropolitan Museum helped formulate the custom plaster which Koons used for the sculptures—a modern plaster as durable as marble. Each work had an electric-blue gazing ball—those glass globes that were a Venetian staple in the 13th century and re-popularized in Victorian times—placed at a strategic spot.

Dr. Eric R. Kandel, a Nobel Prize-winning neuroscientist, was so impressed with the show that he e-mailed Koons afterward. I asked Kandel why. He explained, "I have been interested in the 'beholder's share,' an idea that came from the Viennese art historian Alois Riegl. It involves the concept that when

a painter paints a painting or a sculptor makes a sculpture it is not complete unless a beholder, a viewer, responds to it."

Kandel adds, "When you looked at the sculptures you saw yourself embedded in the gazing balls. Artists sometimes put mirrors in works, but they don't design the work so that you find yourself in the arms or chest of a statue, which is what Jeff did."

When I was visiting the artist and his family at their farm, and all of us—Jeff, Justine, and the kids—jumped into his Koonsmobile, a stretch van with a captain's chair for every child, he was the happiest I'd seen him in the 30 years since we first met. He told me, "One of the things that I'm most proud of is making work that lets viewers not feel intimidated by art, but feel that they can emotionally participate in it through their senses and their intellect and be fully engaged. And feel that they can get a foothold in it, to push themselves off of, and lift themselves up on." As we drove through small industrial communities that had definitely seen better days, Koons pointed out the ubiquitous garden ornaments in so many front yards—the gazing balls, the inflatable bunnies. It's a Jeff Koons world. □

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