

# MUSEO JUMEX PRESENTS FIRST MAJOR EXHIBITION IN MEXICO/LATIN AMERICA EXAMINING THE WORK OF JEFF KOONS AND MARCEL DUCHAMP

## APPEARANCE STRIPPED BARE: DESIRE AND THE OBJECT IN THE WORK OF MARCEL DUCHAMP AND JEFF KOONS, EVEN

GALLERIES 1, 2, 3 & PLAZA

19.MAY.-29.SEP.2019

Mexico City, May 16, 2019—Museo Jumex will present the first major exhibition to bring together the work of two highly influential figures in modern and contemporary art, Marcel Duchamp and Jeff Koons, on view from 19 May through September 29, 2019.

*Appearance Stripped Bare: Desire and the Object in the Work of Marcel Duchamp and Jeff Koons, Even* is guest curated by Massimiliano Gioni, Artistic Director of the New Museum in New York, and features more than 80 works by the artists, drawn from more than 30 collections in Europe and the Americas. Included are Duchamp's complete set of his 1964 edition of the legendary readymades (*Bicycle Wheel*, *Bottle Rack*, and *Fountain*, among others) and Koons's *Rabbit*, *Balloon Dog*, *Moon*, *Play-Doh*, *Hulk*, and selections from series such as *The New*, *Banalilty*, *Made in Heaven*, *Celebration*, and *Antiquity*. Museo Jumex is the exhibition's only venue.

Though separated by decades, both Duchamp and Koons questioned the function of objects and the allure of commodities as they developed separate but complementary philosophies of desire and taste and proposed new ways of thinking about art and the self. Spanning three galleries across 3 floors, the installation is conceived as a music box or *ballet mécanique*, confronting viewers with frequent juxtapositions between the miniature and the enormous, the original and the copy, treating both the visitors and the works of art as pieces of a philosophical puzzle involving definitions of desire, objecthood, and identity.

Koons's *Seated Ballerina* (2017), an inflatable nylon sculpture that stands 45 feet high and is based on a small porcelain figurine of a dancer, will be installed in the museum's outdoor plaza throughout the run of the exhibition. Introduced to the public during a 10-week installation in New York City's Rockefeller Center in 2017, *Seated*

*Ballerina* is one of the many seductive figures—or “objects of desire”—recurring throughout the exhibition, from Duchamp’s “brides” to Koons’s *Metallic Venus*.

Eugenio López Alonso, President of Fundación Jumex, said, “Museo Jumex is pleased to bring this provocative exhibition to Mexico, and to show for the first time the similarities and divergences of these two great artists. We look forward to welcoming visitors from Mexico and around the world to the museum for this extraordinary presentation. I am grateful to Jeff Koons for his enthusiasm and generosity throughout the development of this exhibition, to Massimiliano Gioni for proposing this unique pairing of artists, and to the collectors and international institutions who are helping to make this exhibition possible.”

Massimiliano Gioni said, “It is a unique opportunity to be able to bring together the work of Marcel Duchamp and Jeff Koons. Only a museum with the expertise and the generosity of Jumex could take on such a daunting endeavor, and their effort to realize this exhibition is made even more special by the relationship of Mexico’s most prominent avant-garde poet, Octavio Paz, to the work of Marcel Duchamp. *Appearance Stripped Bare* is less preoccupied with grafting family trees than with understanding how our attitudes toward objects have changed over the past century, and how the objects that we surround ourselves with are reflections of our desires.”

## EXHIBITION SYNOPSIS

Rather than a direct filiation, the exhibition proposes a system of both formal and conceptual resonances between the two artists—pursuing what Duchamp called a “co-intelligence des contraires,” or a “co-understanding of opposites,” between their artistic worlds. The exhibition is structured through five sections that explore distinct yet interrelated themes.

### AN EROTICS OF THINGS

Marcel Duchamp and Jeff Koons share a striking preoccupation with exploring the ways in which everyday objects can evoke desire and project, or reflect, sexuality. In the trajectory of their objects and reproductions from the readymade to the replica, both artists uncover an “erotics of things,” to borrow a notion theorized by art historian David Joselit. As Duchamp observed, shifts in early 20<sup>th</sup> century retail culture fostered a new emphasis on consumer choice, which led him, as an artist, to consider the possibility of *choice* as a form of artistic labor. Confronting long-standing aesthetic ideals and conventions, Duchamp introduced his first readymades—everyday commercial goods which he chose to display as art—in 1913, including the now iconic bicycle wheel mounted on a stool, snow shovel, and, famously, the upside-down urinal known as *Fountain* (1917). In the exhibition, these works are juxtaposed with early examples by Koons in which devices of display and presentation lend an aura of desirability to ordinary consumer products, such as a basketball (*One Ball Total Equilibrium Tank*, 1985) and a bucket (*Pail*, 1986), while in his subsequent works, everyday objects are transformed into shinier, implicitly more valuable versions of themselves.

### THE SEX APPEAL OF THE INORGANIC

Both artists found that mechanical apparatuses and products of technology yielded rich metaphors for human bodies, sexuality, and the workings of desire. Starting around 1910, Duchamp created works that acknowledged the dizzying increase of industrial production, the rationalization of the body by science, and an emerging consumer culture in which desire was driving force of commerce. His explorations of correspondences between desiring bodies and machines reached their peak with his *The Bride Stripped Bare by Her Bachelors, Even (The Large Glass)* (1915–23), a nine-foot-tall allegory-in-a-window depicting a “Bride” and “Bachelors” connected by mysterious mechanical apparatuses. With automated or aleatory processes, Duchamp ventured further into modes of appropriation, delegation, and outsourcing—all of which are central to the work of Koons. Revealing the erotics of familiar domestic machines, Koons’s works from *The New* present brand-new Hoover vacuums sealed in acrylic display cases and bathed in white fluorescent light as untouched objects of desire—chaste mechanical brides that echo the “bachelor machines” of Duchamp’s *Large Glass*.

### VICE SANS FIN OR THE ANATOMY OF DESIRE

More than any other subject, eros is seminal in the oeuvres of Duchamp and Koons. In his treatment of mechanics, anatomy, and vision, Duchamp always regarded desire—and its associated transgression, vice, and voyeurism—as an infinitely fertile source of creativity, freedom, and pleasure. Eroticism and sexuality also teem endlessly in the work of Koons, and are central to the viewer’s path to self-acceptance and freedom guilt and shame that might otherwise accompany their desires. While Koons’s *Metallic Venus* (2010–12) sculpture openly enacts the undressing of the bride suggested in Duchamp’s *Large Glass*, its polished steel surface reflects its viewers, literally bringing them into the picture. The sexually explicit portraits in Koons’s *Made in Heaven* series (1989–91) take Duchamp’s dictum “Eros, c’est la vie” to an even more salacious degree of literalness in their scenes of a modern-day Adam and Eve.

### THE SELF-READYMADE—IDENTITY AS A MEDIUM

Both artists developed their own philosophies of desire and taste and, in doing so, championed new ways of thinking about the artist’s identity and persona. Duchamp invented a female alter ego, Rose Sélavy, with whose name he signed many of his works in the 1920s; similarly for Koons, the identity of the artist is an infinitely malleable medium in itself. Duchamp deployed masquerade as a strategy to deliberately refuse any singular role to the artist, while Koons wholeheartedly embraces the public role of the artist, using the visual vocabulary of advertising to build on the idea of the artist as a celebrity and a brand. In works such as *Tzanck Check* (1919), in which Duchamp, as a gesture of self-incorporation, invented a bank and drew (literally, by hand) an obviously forged check, and *Belle Haleine* (1921), in which the artist, in drag as Rose Sélavy, serves as the trademark on a perfume label, Duchamp playfully explored the conventions of finance and branding. Koons’s sculptural series *Banality* and *Luxury & Degradation* probe the ways in which class dictates one’s objects of

desire, while his *Art Ad Portfolio* (1988–89) explores identity as a malleable, self-determined display, depicting Koons as a playboy, a teacher, a movie star. Using different strategies, Koons and Duchamp each demonstrate that the artist is not only the author of the works he makes but also of the persona that he creates—and their works reflect their awareness of the artist as a commodity within a vast marketplace of constructed desires.

## INNOCENCE AND CORRUPTION

Duchamp and Koons have each countered the myth of childhood as uncontaminated by moral or consumerist norms that would otherwise shape and corrupt desires and taste. From Duchamp, who envisioned in 1912 a “headlight child” or “machine-child” finding its expression in “the use of the purest metals,” to Koons, who mingles machine and child in his giant mirror-polished metal toys, childhood presents an ideal site for the mechanics of desire and the allure of consumer goods and popular entertainment. With works like Koons’s *Play-Doh* (1994–2014) and reflective balloon toys, and Duchamp’s dizzying *Anémic Cinéma* (1926), both artists appear to acknowledge how images and advertising arouse from an early age and merge with primal pleasures. The humor of juvenilia is present too: the mustache that Duchamp inks on the Mona Lisa like a wisecracking vandal finds a parallel in works by Koons that use various toys as readymades, such as the inflatable lobster to which Koons also adds a Daliesque mustache. In spite of the disparate time periods in which they worked, the notion of childhood for each artist is laced with latent erotics and inevitable social and commercial forces.

## EXHIBITION CATALOGUE

Published by Phaidon in collaboration with Fundación Jumex Arte Contemporáneo, a major catalogue edited by Massimiliano Gioni accompanies the exhibition, featuring contributions by Natalie Bell, Daniel Birnbaum, Thomas Girst, Dorothea von Hantelmann, Adina Kamien-Kazhdan, Helen Molesworth, María Minera, Francis Naumann, Laurent de Sutter, Calvin Tomkins, and Chris Wiley.

## LENDERS TO THE EXHIBITION

*Appearance Stripped Bare* includes works on loan from the Astrup Fearnley Museum, Oslo; The Broad Art Foundation, Los Angeles; Museu Coleção Berardo, Lisbon; Galleria Nazionale d’Arte Moderna e Contemporanea, Rome; The Israel Museum, Jerusalem; Moderna Museet, Stockholm; Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago; National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa; Pinault Collection; Philadelphia Museum of Art; the Sonnabend Collection, New York; and Tate, London, among others.

## MASSIMILIANO GIONI

Massimiliano Gioni is the Edlis Neeson Artistic Director of the New Museum in New York and the director of the Trussardi Foundation in Milan. Gioni has organized numerous international exhibitions, including the 55th Venice Biennale (2013), the Gwangju Biennale (2010), the Berlin Biennale (2006), and Manifesta (2004). At the New Museum, he has curated many group exhibitions including “After Nature” (2008), “Ghosts in the Machine” (2012), “Here and Elsewhere” (2014), and “The Keeper” (2016), along with solo shows by, among others, John Akomfrah, Pawel Althamer, Thomas Bayle, Lynette Yiadom-Boakye, Tacita Dean, Nicole Eisenman, Urs Fischer, Camille Henrot, Carsten Höller, Sarah Lucas, Albert Oehlen, Chris Ofili, Pipilotti Rist, and Anri Sala.

## MUSEO JUMEX

Museo Jumex is the Fundación Jumex Arte Contemporáneo’s main platform. It opened its doors to the public in November 2013 as an institution devoted to contemporary art, whose aim was not only to serve a broad and diverse public, but also to become a laboratory for experimentation and innovation in the arts. Through its exhibitions and public programs, Museo Jumex aspires to become a relevant institution in the field of art by producing and co-producing original exhibitions and research, and familiarizing audiences with the concepts and contexts that inform current art practice. Through the use of critical and pedagogical tools, the museum’s educational programs further the institution’s commitment to build links between contemporary art and the public.

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