

PRESS RELEASE

JEFF KOONS

A Millennium Celebration

Works from the Dakis Joannou Collection 1979-1999

*The New – Equilibrium – Luxury and Degradation – Statuary – Banality –
Made in Heaven – Celebration*

16 December 1999 - 15 May 2000

The Deste Foundation is pleased to announce a retrospective exhibition of Jeff Koons, with works drawn from the Dakis Joannou Collection, one of the most extensive collections of this artist's work. The exhibition presents a wide range of the artist's oeuvre, from some of his earliest works to recently completed paintings. It includes examples from all the artist's major series: *The New, Equilibrium, Luxury and Degradation, Statuary, Banality, Made in Heaven, and Celebration*.

Widely acknowledged as one of the most influential artists of the last 20 years, Koons has also generated considerable controversy and debate surrounding his choice of subject matter and methods of presentation. Addressing some of today's key issues such as class, race, money, sex, obscenity, beauty, power and desire, he raises questions about contemporary life through the experience of mass culture. His work probes the status of the commodity in the context of late capitalism and examines contemporary society's investment in novelty, presentation, and appearance. The artist often appropriates the imagery and tactics of television, the shopping mall, comics and advertising. Elsewhere he references the world of childhood and adolescence, or explores the boundaries of eroticism and sexuality. With his references to ready-made objects, Koons focuses on the strategies of seduction, desire, voyeurism, as well as the underlying fetishism of consumer culture. Although his work deploys the icons of mass production and popular culture, it also implicates the world of high art. From his use of baroque and rococo excess, to elaborations on the Duchampian ready-made and Warhol's transformations of popular iconography, his works straddle the boundary and reflect the ambiguous relationship between art and mass culture, sophisticated aesthetics and kitsch. Koons elevates the status of the commonplace object by endowing it with an iconic resonance. To a great extent his enterprise is associated with the ethics of the 80's and the "me" generation. By turning his own life into art, placing on exhibit particularly provocative and intimate moments, he makes a spectacle of what would otherwise be a very private domain. Above all, his work is about the exploration of human desires, aspirations and illusions as projected through a consumerist and media driven idiom.

For more information please contact the Press Officer, Mr. Fivos Sakalis on +301 6729460.