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PRESS RELEASE

Shortcuts
Works from the Dakis Joannou Collection
The Nicosia Municipal Arts Centre, Cyprus

28 November 2001 – 31 March 2002

Organised by: The Deste Foundation, Centre for Contemporary Art, The Nicosia Municipal Arts Centre – Associated with the Pierides Museum of Contemporary Art, The Cultural Centre, Laiki Group

Curator: Katerina Gregos

Sponsored by: THE LAIKI GROUP

Dakis Joannou began collecting contemporary art in the mid -1980s. The Dakis Joannou Collection is now considered a point of reference and a barometer of some of the most significant trends in contemporary art of the last twenty years. The collection includes works by some of the most influential artists of the eighties and nineties, many of whom are represented by some of their most important works. It is international in scope, including artists from many European countries, North and South America, Asia and Africa. Apart from painting, sculpture, video and photography it also contains a number of ambitious, large-scale installation works and thus transcends the limits of an ordinary domestic collection.

The Dakis Joannou Collection is particularly known for its emphasis on artists who emerged in the mid - to late 1980s. These artists developed a neo-conceptual aesthetic and were interested in examining the ethics of consumerism, the economics of the art market as well as the impact of commodity culture and the deconstruction of the value systems that sustain it. Artists such as Jeff Koons, Ashley Bickerton, Haim Steinbach, Sherrie Levine, Peter Halley, and Barbara Kruger take as their point of departure the strategies of the mass media and the imagery of consumer culture and industry.

The collection also emphasises a younger generation of artists who came to the fore in the 1990s. These artists are less interested in the cool formalism and sharply polished corporate aesthetics of the eighties and more concerned with matters of personal or collective identity, the self, multi-cultural and gender politics, and the issue of inter-disciplinarity. Artists like Janine Antoni, Kara Walker, Chen Zhen, Cai Guo Qiang, Kcho, Chris Ofili, Nari Ward, Shirin Neshat and Yinka Shonibare all reflect in their work the changes that have occurred in the visual arts landscape. These artists demonstrate the increasingly expanded nature of art practice today as well as the variety of languages and strategies currently employed.

Overall, one could say that the collection expresses a preference for artists whose work engages in issues relating to daily life and the experience of the real world. These artists examine a vast array of social, political, economic and cultural questions and testify to the unequivocally reciprocal relationship between art and life.

The exhibition in Cyprus contains a cross section of works from the collection since its inception, aiming to give the viewer a general idea of its orientation. The installation has also been planned in such a way as to indicate the principal thematic axes of interest. It has been separated into four distinctive categories:

From Figure to Object / From Object to Figure

This section includes a group of artists - mainly from the 80s - whose works largely adopt a critical approach to consumerism, Western lifestyle, and the impact of the media and popular culture by dissecting familiar symbols, icons, and images.

Corporal Angst / The Ailing Body

The body has been a recurring source of interest for many artists during the last thirty years. It was during this time that the AIDS crisis dramatically reminded us of its inherent vulnerability, and that developments in biotechnology and genetic engineering generated both hope and a profound concern for the repercussions of such interventions. The artists in this section reflect the multiple anxieties surrounding the human body and its well being.

Anthropocentrism, Identity Politics and the Transformation of the Self

Much of the work in this section is, for the most part, anthropocentric, reflecting a return, in recent years, to the human subject and an increasing interest in attempting to define the self. Questions of personal and collective identity are dealt with and there is a preoccupation with gender, sexuality and the potential to construct one's image at will.

Multi-Cultural Politics and the Intersection of the Global and the Local.

Here, artists of varying origins are brought together and much of the work presented is sited within a multi-cultural context, reflecting the gradual dissolution of boundaries between 'east' and 'west' and the notion of 'centre' vs 'periphery'. The results are often of a hybrid nature and the viewer is witness to an interweaving of Non-Western iconographic references, urban or pop culture and folklore or local culture.

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

LIST OF PARTICIPATING ARTISTS

JANINE ANTONI
JOHN ARMLEDER
MATTHEW BARNEY
VANESSA BEECROFT
ASHLEY BICKERTON
DINOS & JAKE CHAPMAN
CLEGG & GUTTMAN
CHERYL DONEGAN
PETER FISCHLI & DAVID WEISS
KATHARINA FRITSCH
GILBERT & GEORGE
ROBERT GOBER
DOUGLAS GORDON
PETER HALLEY
MONA HATOUM
DAMIEN HIRST
ZHANG HUAN
BRAD KAHLHAMER
KAWS
MARTIN KIPPENBERGER
JEFF KOONS
JOSEPH KOSUTH
GEORGE LAPPAS
CHRISTIAN MARCLAY
MARIKO MORI
YASUMASA MORIMURA
SHIRIN NESHAT
TIM NOBLE & SUE WEBSTER
CADY NOLAND
ALBERT OEHLEN
CHRIS OFILI
DAVID SALLE
CINDY SHERMAN
YINKA SHONIBARE
KIKI SMITH
PIA STADTBAUMER
HAIM STEINBACH
PHILIP TAAFFE
ROSEMARIE TROCKEL
SPENCER TUNICK
MEYER VAISMAN
KARA WALKER
CHRISTOPHER WOOL