

For immediate release

JEFF KOONS

Gazing Ball

May 8 – June 29, 2013



Gazing Ball (Ariadne), 2013 (detail). Plaster and glass

David Zwirner is pleased to present *Gazing Ball*, the gallery's inaugural exhibition with Jeff Koons. On view at 525 and 533 West 19th Street, this major show of sculptures marks the world debut of a new series by the artist. It is his first New York gallery solo exhibition of new work in a decade, and the first solo presentation of his work in the city since *On the Roof* at The Metropolitan Museum of Art in 2008.

Gazing Ball takes its name from the mirrored spherical ornaments frequently found on lawns, gardens, and patios around Koons's childhood home in Pennsylvania. Their unique visual qualities allow viewers to see around corners while absorbing them and their entire surroundings within one image. Koons has made use of highly reflective curved surfaces in his sculptures from the mid-1980s onwards, and the gazing balls can be seen to echo the consummate attention to detail and materiality found throughout his oeuvre.

The artist notes on the series: "I've thought about the gazing ball for decades. I've wanted to show the affirmation, generosity, sense of place, and joy of the senses that the gazing ball symbolizes. The *Gazing Ball* series is based in transcendence. The realization of one's mortality is abstract thought and from there, one is able to have a concept of the external world, one's family, community, and a vaster dialogue with humankind beyond the present. The *Gazing Ball* series is based on the philosopher's gaze, starting with transcendence through the senses, but directing one's vision (the philosopher's gaze) towards the eternal through pure form and ideas."

Hand-blown from glass, the blue gazing balls have been placed on white plaster sculptures depicting signature examples of antique statues from the Greco-Roman era along with everyday utilitarian objects encountered in today's suburban and rural landscape, such as mailboxes and a birdbath. While Koons's sculptures to date have involved time-intensive processes in metal and stone, the plaster represents a distinct point of departure. Regularly used in the nineteenth century to create casts of older works, its immediacy was particularly favored by modernist artists including Picasso, whose works in the medium Koons cites as a source of inspiration.

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In *Gazing Ball*, the pristine whiteness of the sculptures stands in stark contrast to the brightly colored spheres, which subtly alter their appearance based on available lighting and nearby elements. Yet, the gazing balls' seriality throughout the exhibition creates an element of continuity across stylistic genres and epochs that inspires a dialogue between old and new, classical and commonplace.

A major retrospective of the artist's work, curated by Scott Rothkopf, will open in June 2014 at the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, which will tour to the Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris.

Jeff Koons (b. 1955) had his first solo exhibition in 1980 at the New Museum in New York. In 1988, his first American survey was held at the Museum of Contemporary Art in Chicago. From 1992 to 1993, an international retrospective toured between the Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam; San Francisco Museum of Modern Art; Staatsgalerie Stuttgart, Germany; Walker Art Center, Minneapolis; and the Aarhus Kunstmuseum, Denmark.

Solo exhibitions from the past decade include those organized by the Museo Archeologico Nazionale, Naples, 2003; Astrup Fearnley Museum of Modern Art, Oslo, 2004 (traveled to the Helsinki City Art Museum, 2005); Château de Versailles, France, 2008; Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago, 2008; The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, 2008; Neue Nationalgalerie, Berlin, 2008; Serpentine Gallery, London, 2009; Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art, Edinburgh, 2011; Fondation Beyeler, Basel, 2012; and the Schirn Kunsthalle Frankfurt and Liebieghaus Skulpturensammlung, Frankfurt, a joint exhibition in 2012.

Work by the artist is held in numerous public collections, including The Broad Art Foundation, Santa Monica, California; Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington, D.C.; Los Angeles County Museum of Art; Museum of Contemporary Art, Tokyo; The Museum of Modern Art, New York; National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.; San Francisco Museum of Modern Art; Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam; Tate Gallery, London; and the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York. He lives and works in New York.

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