



Jeff Koons & Cy Twombly: Primal Gestures

BASTIAN, 8 Davies Street, London W1K 3DW

Tuesday 12th October – Saturday 4th December 2021

Press view: Tuesday 12th October 2021, 9-10am

Private view: Tuesday 12th October 2021, 6:30-8.30pm

Jeff Koons & Cy Twombly: *Primal Gestures* brings together a highly unusual pairing of two giants of post-war art. Highlighting two seemingly opposing practices, the exhibition exposes Twombly's rich visual lexicon of mark-making and gestural abstraction, pairing it with the reductive nature of Koons' machine-made fabrications while teasing out underlying elements that suggest a commonality that is perhaps not all it appears to be.

The title of the exhibition has its genesis in Koons' monumental painting, *Primal Swish*. Executed between 2008-11 this rich tapestry showcases a multi-layered explosion of energetic swirls whose energy is jarred against the serenity and three-dimensional lure of a rose. There is, however, an unsettling precision in the way Koons has applied his expressionistic linear brushstrokes, luring the viewer into a Twombly-esque vigour of densely layered gestures. Lacking any emotive character and natural fluidity, these deceptive swirls and scripts have in fact been enlarged, edited and layered using Photoshop, before being fastidiously painted on canvas to achieve an exact replication. Koons writes, "They are fake gestures... - they make reference to gestures. A gesture can be an intellectual gesture, it doesn't have to be physical." Here we see Koons set his sights on a meticulous devotion to the mechanics of reality as he unpicks the chameleonic dynamic between the physical and the psychological.

Exhibited alongside is Cy Twombly's *Untitled* set of six lithographs executed in 1971. A series

born out of the artist's desire to achieve a more expressive form of gesture. Working directly onto the litho stones, Twombly was able to indulge in a more visceral process of mark-making, developing a new script that spoke directly to the relationship between crayon and stone, ink and paper. Regarded as the pinnacle of Twombly's achievements in printmaking, this series encapsulates the artist's fascination with raw gestural mark-making while capturing a melody of heavy impasto coils, sharp scratches and frenetically sketched spirals.

Two further Koons works here are from the *Gazing Ball* series in which the artist makes direct reference to canonical works art. In each image a mirrored, seemingly three-dimensional, hand-blown blue glass gazing ball reflects its surroundings. On closer inspection the surface remains resolutely two-dimensional, drawing the viewer to dissect another cunning interplay between fact and fiction.

Like much of his work, the *Gazing Ball* series reactivates and intensifies familiar scenes, whether from legend or the everyday, reflecting and affirming viewers and their environments. Cy Twombly developed a gestural vocabulary in which each line and colour is infused with energy, spirituality, and meaning. His works are simultaneously personal and mythological, allowing narrative, language, and inner visions to erupt from his intimate, abstract notations. Also included in the exhibition is Twombly's *Five Greek Poets and a Philosopher*, a set which captures the artist profound dedication to ancient culture. Sharp, gestural capital letters tease out the names of Latin poets and Greek philosophers, as if presented scrawled onto stone tablets.

The exhibition encourages the viewer to decipher the politics of process and presentation, to find merit in the hyperreal reproduction or the frenetic violence of primal gestures.

Notes to Editors

Title	<i>Jeff Koons & Cy Twombly: Primal Gestures</i>
Exhibition Dates	Tuesday 12 th October – Saturday 4 th December 2021
Location	BASTIAN, 8 Davies Street, London W1K 3DW www.bastian-gallery.com 020 3940 5009
Opening Hours	Tuesday - Saturday, 10am – 6pm

Admission Free

Getting there Located in the heart of Mayfair, the closest underground stations are Green Park (on the Jubilee, Piccadilly and Victoria lines) and Bond Street (on the Central and Jubilee lines). The nearest rail station is Charing Cross.

BASTIAN

Established by Céline and Heiner Bastian in 1989, the gallery has been directed by Aeneas Bastian since 2016. 20th Century artists, such as Pablo Picasso and Jean Dubuffet, as well as German and American post-war artists including Joseph Beuys, Anselm Kiefer, Cy Twombly, Robert Rauschenberg and Andy Warhol, form the core of the exhibition program.

The gallery publishes numerous exhibition catalogues, artist monographs and catalogue raisonnés. BASTIAN participates at international art fairs, such as FRIEZE MASTERS, Dallas Art Fair, MASTERPIECE London, Taipei Dangdai, Art Cologne and Art Düsseldorf.

From 2007 until 2019 BASTIAN Berlin has shown exhibitions dedicated to modern and contemporary art. At the beginning of 2019, the Bastian family donated their building Am Kupfergraben to the State Museums of Berlin, who have established an art education centre there, which was inaugurated on 1 September 2019.

Located in Mayfair, the London gallery opened on 1 February 2019. Since its opening the gallery has presented solo exhibitions of Andy Warhol, Cy Twombly, Ulrich Erben, Dan Flavin, Hans Hofmann, Pablo Picasso and Robert Rauschenberg.

In Autumn 2021, the gallery will open a new 3,500 sqft gallery space in Berlin Dahlem designed by John Pawson, which will be its new international headquarters, making a major new development in the history of BASTIAN in its home town of Berlin.

All enquiries, high res images and further information:

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