



THE MUSEUM OF CONTEMPORARY ART

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**THE MUSEUM OF CONTEMPORARY ART, LOS ANGELES (MOCA),
HONORS ARTIST AND MOCA BENEFACTOR**

JEFF KOONS

AT ANNUAL GALA ON SATURDAY, APRIL 29, 2017

**CO-CHAIRIED BY MOCA TRUSTEES
LILLY TARTIKOFF KARATZ AND MAURICE MARCIANO**



Jeff Koons, 2014, photo by BFA.

LOS ANGELES – The Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles (MOCA), will host its annual gala on Saturday, April 29, at The Geffen Contemporary at MOCA, in honor of Jeff Koons. For this year’s gala, co-chaired by MOCA Trustees Lilly Tartikoff Karatz and Maurice Marciano, the museum will transform The Geffen Contemporary at MOCA into an immersive setting inspired by Koons’s vibrant, highly polished, and meticulously crafted aesthetic. Bright colors, reflective surfaces, and optimistic imagery will dominate the decor. Koons’s *Celebration* series, which delights in the rituals and images surrounding birthdays, holidays, and other special occasions, serves as a particular point of inspiration for the evening. As part of its nod to the series, the gala will showcase *Balloon Dog (Orange)*, *Balloon Dog (Magenta)*, and *Balloon Dog (Yellow)*, a series of limited edition plates by Koons, produced in France by the legendary French porcelain maker Bernardaud.

“Jeff Koons is an artist who is constantly evolving and pushing the boundaries of art, creating works that are dynamic, energetic, and intricate in their process and execution,” says gala co-chair and MOCA Trustee Maurice Marciano. “He is an extreme perfectionist in the most ambitious way, and that allows him to imagine the work he makes. We are so excited to honor him for the incredible spirit of his practice and his contributions to the contemporary art world and to the MOCA community.”

Fellow gala co-chair and MOCA Trustee Lilly Tartikoff Karatz adds, “Jeff Koons redefined sculpture for his generation, all the while delighting us through work that relishes optimism and joy in flawless precision. We are so proud to celebrate Jeff’s amazing work and his very meaningful commitment to MOCA.”

MOCA honors Koons not only for his work as one of the most innovative and forward-thinking artists of our time, but also for his generosity as a donor to the museum over the past five years. In 2015 he donated a significant sculpture, *Gazing Ball (Centaur and Lapith Maiden)*, to the museum’s benefit auction with Sotheby’s, and for the last four years he has worked in partnership with MOCA and Bernardaud on the *Balloon Dog* plates offered at MOCA, the sales of which benefit the museum’s endowment. In total, Koons’s generosity has contributed over \$5 million to MOCA.

“We rarely consider artists in their role as philanthropists,” remarks MOCA Director Philippe Vergne. “They give a great deal to institutions by donating their work to collections, by giving their work to benefit auctions, and by writing checks. However, they are seldom recognized in this capacity. Jeff has shown remarkable generosity to MOCA, and this is our chance to say thank you and to celebrate his monumental contributions to culture and his unsung philanthropy. By supporting MOCA, Jeff Koons supports all the artists that the museum works with. He makes experimentation and risk taking possible; he allows us to stay ahead.”

THE GALA EVENING

Guests will start to gather at The Geffen Contemporary at MOCA at 6pm for a cocktail reception and special viewing of the current exhibitions *Carl Andre: Sculpture as Place, 1958–2010*, Arthur Jafa’s *Love Is The Message, The Message Is Death*, and *Selections from the Permanent Collection: Catherine Opie and Sterling Ruby*. At 8pm, the night will continue with dinner provided by Wolfgang Puck in an adjacent tent, whose design takes direct inspiration from Jeff Koons’s *Celebration* series.

Individual tickets to this year’s MOCA Gala range from \$2,500 to \$10,000. Gala table prices range from \$25,000 to \$100,000. For table and ticket information, please email gala@moca.org.

HONOREE JEFF KOONS

Jeff Koons was born in York, Pennsylvania, in 1955. He studied at the Maryland Institute College of Art in Baltimore and the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. Koons lives and works in New York City.

Since his first solo exhibition in 1980, Koons’s work has been shown in major galleries and institutions throughout the world. His work was the subject of a major exhibition organized by the Whitney Museum of American Art, *Jeff Koons: A Retrospective*, which traveled to the Centre Pompidou, Paris, and the Guggenheim Bilbao. *Jeff Koons*, a solo exhibition of recent work, will be on view in Los Angeles at Gagosian, Beverly Hills (April 27–June 10, 2017).

Koons earned renown for his public sculptures, such as the monumental floral sculpture *Puppy* (1992), which is permanently installed at the Guggenheim Bilbao. Another floral sculpture, *Split-Rocker* (2000), previously installed at the Papal Palace in Avignon, Château de Versailles, and Fondation Beyeler in Basel, was most recently on view at Rockefeller Center in 2014.

Jeff Koons has received numerous awards and honors in recognition of his cultural achievements. Notably, he received the Distinguished Arts Award from the Governor’s Awards for the Arts, administered by the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts, and the Golden Plate Award from the American Academy of Achievement; was promoted to Officier de la Legion d’honneur by President Jacques Chirac; and was honored by Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton with the State Department’s Medal of Arts for his outstanding commitment to the Art in Embassies program and international cultural exchange. Koons has been a board member of the International Centre for Missing & Exploited Children (ICMEC) since 2002, and he co-founded the Koons Family Institute on International Law & Policy at ICMEC, for the purpose of combating global issues of child abduction and exploitation and protecting the world’s children.

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BALLOON DOG (ORANGE), BY JEFF KOONS



Jeff Koons, *Balloon Dog (Orange)*, 2015, porcelain, 10 1/2 x 10 1/2 x 5 inches (26.7 x 26.7 x 12.7 cm), © Jeff Koons.

MOCA is pleased to be collaborating with the artist and Bernardaud on the exclusive sale of Koons's *Balloon Dog*, a series of limited edition artworks in orange, yellow, and magenta, referencing his monumental sculpture of the same name. *Balloon Dog* is one of the most iconic works from Koons's *Celebration* series, which commemorates special occasions while also serving as commentary on the cycle of life and death. "It is about celebration and childhood and color and simplicity," says Koons, "but it's also a Trojan horse. It's a Trojan horse to the whole body of artwork." Koons's exacting standards are one of the most captivating aspects of his art, as captured in this porcelain balloon dog, whose reflective finish simulates the mirror-polished stainless steel of the original sculpture. This highly complex project required the skill and expertise of modelers, decorators, and glazers within the workshop of Bernardaud, which created new technologies in order to meet the artist's requirements. All net proceeds of the sales of the most recent edition, *Balloon Dog (Orange)*, available exclusively through MOCA through 2017, benefit the museum. To date, the limited edition series has raised over \$3.5 million.

THE MUSEUM OF CONTEMPORARY ART, LOS ANGELES (MOCA)

Founded in 1979, MOCA's vision is to be the defining museum of contemporary art. In a relatively short period of time, MOCA has achieved astonishing growth with three Los Angeles locations of architectural renown; a world-class permanent collection of more than 6,800 objects international in scope and among the finest in the world; hallmark education programs that are widely emulated; award-winning publications that present original scholarship; groundbreaking monographic, touring, and thematic exhibitions of international repute that survey the art of our time; and cutting-edge engagement with modes of new media production. MOCA is a not-for-profit institution that relies on a variety of funding sources for its activities.

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